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DIVINE HUMANITY

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BY

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'. . . Then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.'

—*Matthew Arnold.*

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First published in 1917.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS

THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL.

Modern intellectual activity; its dangers—confusion of thought, materialism; harmonising of cardinal beliefs necessary but difficult; does science reject belief in spiritual world? function of science; consideration of (a) the mechanism of the universe, (b) teleology of the universe, (c) composition of objects, (d) doctrine of evolution, (e) theory of spontaneous generation, (f) faculty of mentation; the fallacy of materialism.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SPIRITUAL.

Matter and spirit, their relationship; inseparable except in thought; matter the ministerial, spirit the dominating element; unselfishness a sign of moral health; indications of an after-life; laws of the two kingdoms an expression of the same will; freedom and progress by obedience.

SIN AND SUFFERING.

Sin, defiance of spiritual supremacy; its purpose; its nature; Biblical account of a fall; devils and demoniacs. Result of sin, suffering; purpose of suffering other than penal; vicarious suffering.

DEATH AND BEYOND.

Death (a) a mode of transition, (b) an aspect of suffering consequent on sin; spiritual death; Christ's Resurrection a fact; conjunction of normal with abnormal characteristics in the risen Body; its significance.

THE WORLD WAITING FOR CHRIST.

Evolution of man's spiritual instinct; meaning of revelation; man's response (a) in the pagan world, (b) among the Jews; importance and effects of Judaism; preparations for the supreme revelation; condition of mankind prior to the birth of Christ.

THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Introductory—modern rationalism, authenticity of the Gospels, doctrine of the Kenosis; the Incarnation the fulfilment of the past; its purpose; its method, the Virgin Birth.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

Conjunction of Divinity with humanity; human characteristics —experiences, observations, effect on others, limitations, sufferings, emotions; Divine characteristics—events, insight, Personality, claims; Divine humanity—symbolism and metaphor, conjunction of two worlds, teaching, character.

MIRACLES.

(Appendix to previous chapter).
Misuse of word miracle; laws of motive; laws of condition; laws of method; three cases of raising from death; demoniac healing; review.

PROOF AND POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

Summary of preceding arguments; the reasonableness of Christianity as an explanation of life.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

Application of foregoing principles; need of a visible Church; elasticity, a necessary condition; apparent defects in the Church of England—(a) limitation of custom and routine, (b) emphasis of non-essentials; sectarianism, the result; need of adaptation and adjustment; relations of Church and State; the future.

PREFACE

The following pages have been written in the belief that many whose opportunity for study is limited would welcome a consideration of some of the critical problems of our time within the compass of a single volume. And my aim has been not so much to treat the various questions in detail, though in every case I have endeavoured to state the arguments with fairness; but to present them as integral parts of a connected whole culminating in the reasonableness of the Christian Faith, with special reference to the supreme naturalness of those events which it is now becoming only too fashionable to regard as a contradiction of the natural. The thread which runs throughout is the relationship of matter and spirit, not as it may appear in theories or ideal philosophies but as we perceive it in the world of which we have experience.

Owing to the comprehensiveness of the subject a certain obscurity is bound to occur in the employment of terms not always defined. But care has been taken to avoid this danger as far as possible by using expressions only in

their generally accepted meaning. It will be understood that no attempt has been made at exhaustive treatment. The purpose kept in view has been to break up fallow ground for others, to do some spade-work otherwise neglected because distasteful, to provide—if possible—a standpoint from which life may assume coherence.

It would seem advisable to state that the latest developments in controversy on matters vital to the Christian Faith, and the grave unrest which is abroad, have reached their more serious phase since this book was planned.

In a work of this nature it is impossible to acknowledge at all adequately the debt due to the writings of others, and I can only hope to repay it by helping on the cause which they have at heart. Among those for whose criticisms, suggestions, or encouragement I am particularly grateful I should like to mention Mr. L. R. Pym, Mr. A. C. Turner, and the Reverend T. W. Pym.

It is far from the wish of the writer to enforce personal views, and if the line of argument adopted fails to appeal to those who read I trust that they may feel encouraged to undertake—but with better success—a similar task for themselves. If any of the thoughts which follow should make that task easier, the time which I have spent upon them will not be unrewarded.

ORTA, JUNE, 1914. A.P.

POSTCRIPT.—More than a year has passed since these lines were written, and during the interval nations have been plunged into a struggle for existence. At first it seemed that words were a mockery in a world where action had become the supreme and final test. Yet believing that at a time when the principles and foundations of civilisation hang in the balance a book which deals with such principles is not entirely out of place, I have ventured after considerable delay to agree to its publication.

WINCHESTER,
SEPT., 1916. A.P.

SHADOWS

'For now we see through a glass darkly.' . . .

DIVINE HUMANITY

CHAPTER I

THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL

During the last century the beliefs of ages have been brought before the tribunal of a merciless inquisition. Physical research has revolutionized previous theories as to the ultimate composition of matter, the formation of the planets, the evolution of life, the structure and history of the human frame. Gigantic forces, dormant in nature, have been explored and harnessed to man's use. The cog-wheels and levers of the universe have been exposed to view and closely scrutinized. The study of psychology has shed new light upon the mechanism of the brain and phenomena of consciousness. The powers of telepathy, hypnotism and telekinetic energy have been brought within the horizon of scientific acceptance. And this intellectual enterprise has not been confined to the few. A widespread curiosity has been aroused. Every step has been watched with profound interest;

details have been demanded of every discovery, and the kaleidoscope of knowledge has been displayed before the eyes of an admiring world in a bewildering profusion of colour, shape and combination. Probably never before has so great an advance in knowledge been made in so short a time; never has the average intellect been more keen.

But this abnormal activity has not been without evil results, and chief among them is the confusion of thought which prevails. The full significance of recent discoveries has too often been obscured by an admixture of conjecture and speculation. It is not always clear at what point facts end and hypothesis begins. The task of discrimination requiring a considerable amount of time in view of the mass of miscellaneous information which has accumulated is possible only for the few. Orthodoxy is in danger of becoming, if not a confession of indifference, at any rate an inevitable concession to an exacting routine, rather than a system of thought or action prompted by conviction.

And the re-arrangement of fundamental conceptions has few attractions at a period of chronic intellectual disquiet. A spirit of restlessness and uncertainty pervades modern thought. These are days when the importance of intellect is accentuated, and logical demonstration demanded in proof of professed belief. Those who set out to attain a solid foothold

in the quagmire of fact and theory are confronted by contradictory assertions, all claiming to be authoritative; and the conclusions of scientific or theological thought, imperfectly apprehended by reason of the obscurity with which they are surrounded, induce unorthodoxy or scepticism. Cherished ideals, if they are to be saved from destruction, must be strictly isolated from realities. Masses of knowledge are divided into detached and disconnected groups, little effort being made to solve the problem of their incongruities. The brain is transformed into an enormous bureau, portioned out into innumerable drawers and pigeonholes; each drawer with its particular label and mode of arrangement, but distinct from all neighbouring drawers. In this way a certain orderliness is secured, but it is only superficial. No tabulated system of knowledge, involving artificial divisions into isolated departments, without means of transition from one to another, with no adjustment or co-ordination of contradictory detail, can be satisfactory. The gain in precision is counterbalanced by the lack of coherence. As soon as an intellectual or moral crisis occurs, the contents of the drawers must be re-distributed, and then the underlying confusion is plain. A searching examination follows with disturbing results. Disillusionment, unrest, religious instability ensue. Perhaps for a time peace of mind may be restored by a deliberate rejection

of trustworthy evidence, or by a definite postponement of a final judgment. Or perhaps it may never be regained.

In spite of the difficulty the review and harmonisation of cardinal beliefs is an imperative duty; it is only in this way that confidence can be secured. We do not expect to reach a full understanding of the enigmas of life, nor shall we be disappointed if problems remain unsolved. Our way lies through thick darkness, illuminated only here and there by the fitful gleams of the lamps left by the Maker of the road. We may feel sure as to the direction in which the goal lies, but the nature of the journey remains unknown. Comrades are heard hurrying in all directions, some with the sure tread of conviction, some tottering and feeble, others again swift but reckless. Desperate cries are raised at times for certainty of knowledge, only to die away again in the silence of callousness or exhaustion. Yet glimpses of the truth are revealed. There are moments when the perplexity of years is lit by some passing vision. The distant City is wreathed in clouds, but those clouds sometimes break:—

'Ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity:
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, and then
Round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again.'*

* F. Thompson: 'The Hound of Heaven.'

Perhaps the most insidious evil that dogs the progress of science is an unreasoned materialism. Through a spirit of self-sufficiency, engendered by success, pioneers are unwilling to admit the possibility of a no-road on any path of investigation. In the cold light of intellectual achievement the idea of a superhuman control becomes less attractive. As the *how and why* of things is discovered, there is felt to be less need of a *deus ex machina* to cut the tangle of problems presented by the world of nature. Those who learn to dispense with the direct intervention of a supernatural agent, as an immediate explanation of phenomena otherwise unintelligible, are prone to lose sight of the fact that Deity may have other parts to play besides those of a mechanic. The position of a god, who is regarded merely as a convenient means of extricating humanity from awkward positions—and that is the god whom many worship —becomes precarious when that function is removed by a more intelligent appreciation of the laws of cause and effect. The throne of such a being is human superstition and fallibility. The puppet erected upon human ignorances totters at the first breath of knowledge : the self-reliance of his subjects replaces trust. In addition to an uncertainty of thought, which from incomplete acquaintance with the facts, or from inability to apply them, concludes that the results of scientific study are

antagonistic to a belief in a spiritual world, we must also regard such inadequate conceptions of God as a contributing factor of considerable importance to the prevalence of materialism.

The inquirer then is confronted by two facts:—the fact of scientific success, and the fact of an ineradicable belief among mankind in the reality of spiritual forces. In which is truth? *Prima facie* the balance of probability inclines to the trustworthiness of the brain. Things of sense are vivid, apparently real, and capable of explanation. Spiritual experiences on the other hand are liable to be confused by imagination or emotionalism. There is a lurking suspicion, which it is sometimes difficult to overcome, that ideas of human immortality and Divine guidance are attributable to nothing more than sentiment. Other considerations, however, make us pause. Man's release from Divine control is after all only a change of masters; matter replaces Godhead; humanity is still in bondage. If the sounds of a spirit world are faint, that is only natural in the midst of the absorbing pursuits of an earth life, and some echoes at any rate would seem to reach us. Who has not experienced at some time or other—perhaps in the presence of a masterpiece of art, sometimes in pursuit of sin, —the overwhelming conviction that there is a reality more enduring than the ephemerality of sensuous objects? At once the mind seems to

apprehend something of the truth of the Fatherhood of God, and the vivid intensity of that moment is more potent in shaping lives for good than years of indulgence in influencing for evil. We cannot ignore such evidence as that of human experience in any search for truth. The choice does not lie between atheism on the one side and fanaticism on the other; a *via media* must be found on which science and religion may meet. It remains then for us to consider in this chapter whether the view that the work of science ends in materialism is justifiable. Is it true that intellectual enlightenment is antagonistic to a belief in a Supreme Being? Can the conclusions of the brain be reconciled with those of intuition?

In setting out into the field of life in quest of a spiritual world let us not journey as opponents of science. No conclusions established by research, of whatever nature they may be, can fail to indicate the way; if there is a fundamental reality behind the form of things, the many branches of knowledge must converge towards it. But in accepting scientific conclusions we must exercise a certain caution. It is necessary to guard against a class of pseudo-scientists who persist in regarding hypothesis as synonymous with fact, and the laboratory as coextensive with life. That such a view is contradicted by the very nature of the art which they profess

to study may be perceived by recalling to mind the peculiar function and purpose of science.

The province to which the physicist confines his attention is that which is reducible to invariable law, namely—the material world. His object is the reduction of the heterogeneous mass of natural phenomena to a simplified and intelligible unity, and the instrument upon which he relies to accomplish his purpose is the postulate of causal connection. Assuming that the world of things admits of explanation he unifies diversities by means of an underlying cause. Principles of causation are gradually disclosed: sequences of cause and effect are tabulated, and an apparently capricious universe is transformed into an ordered and regulated cosmos.

But the physicist starts professedly with an initial limitation. All phenomena, whose nature is irregular and therefore not subject to such generalisations, are excluded. The vagaries of will, and the incomprehensible manifestations of the spirit world fall beyond the legitimate scope of physical inquiry. And the fact of this limitation destroys any importance that otherwise might attach to its materialistic tendencies. As its professed object is the reduction of the physical universe to uniformity, its field of investigation the world of objects, its premises exclusive of the spiritual, the result could hardly be otherwise. If the scientist claimed to interpret every phase of

life, or asserted that his province coincided with the range of human experience, human initiative would be destroyed. If he could authoritatively and categorically deny the possibility of the existence of higher agencies, the religions of ages would crumble to dust. At his imperious summons the crowds that for centuries had thronged the brazen gates of Heaven would see those massive portals at last swing back revealing—a sanctuary?—rather, a dreary throne adorned with tinsel and draped with shabby hangings,—empty. No God; only a dream. No occupant had ever sat upon the great Throne of Heaven. While mortals worshipped, vermin sported among the crimson cushions. That which had been reverenced as the Holy of Holies proved to be a lumber-room: where it had been thought dwelt God, was dust: in the place of Deity, cobwebs. But the scientist makes no such claim. In isolating physical phenomena for the purpose of study he admits to the deliberate exclusion of spiritual activities, and by rigorously ignoring such activities his results, though trustworthy within his own sphere, become incomplete and only partially true as an interpretation of life.

It must not be supposed, however, that—in disregarding—the scientist is condemning a belief in a spirit world. As his ostensible object is the reduction of the supernatural to the natural, the superimposition of order upon

disorder, the expression of the unknown in terms of the known, his attitude is non-committal; judgment is suspended. There is no radical antagonism. The presence of a spirit world no more discredits the work of science than scientific progress menaces religion. Controversies are caused not by inherent incompatibility, but by disloyalty to cardinal principles, by forgetfulness of self-imposed limitations, by obtrusion of unauthorised conjectures, on the part of the one; and by a spirit of dogmatism and a certain narrow-mindedness on the part of the other. The work of science is to a large extent parallel and supplementary to that of religion. The former examines and questions; the latter, although not identifying herself with the process of hypothesis and generalisation, incorporates the results. And science derives benefit from this association. Instead of presenting a regular but purposeless mass of systematised data, its discoveries gain a profound significance.

There are two common causes of anxiety to those who would establish the reality of spiritual activities in a scientific manner. The first of these is an occasional absence of the spiritual instinct or perception in individuals; and the second, the impossibility of obtaining conclusive proof. But it must not be forgotten that particular cases of failure to detect a spiritual element establish no sound argument that such an element does not exist. A trained

faculty is as essential for intelligent appreciation in this as in any other branch of inquiry. No one can expect to distinguish the mingling shades of a landscape without a trained sense of colour, or to differentiate the intricate themes of orchestral music without a cultivated sense of hearing; without spiritual perception no one, and least of all those immersed in selfish occupations, can hope to detect or understand phenomena of the spirit kingdom. Spiritual perceptiveness is the alphabet of spiritual knowledge, without which the writings of that other world upon the walls of sense are hieroglyphs. At present those who have the keenest vision see only through a glass darkly. The world is full of shadows. Dreams and phantoms strangely intermingle with realities. A universal blindness might be conclusive, but occasional instances are unconvincing.

And again little importance can be attached to the impossibility of obtaining certain proof. Neither in the realm of things nor in the realm of thought is any so called proof irrefutable. There is no generally accepted fact of history which does not admit of some degree of doubt; the strongest chain of circumstantial evidence or of reasoned argument establishes nothing but an element of probability. Instinct is liable to be mistrusted if contradicted by the cold reasoning of logic, and yet no logical sequence is exempt from the possibility of error. The most important things of life are

believed, not proved. Absence of proof is no mark of insecurity: rational assurance no criterion of infallibility. Uncertainty is the key-note of existence. In spite of every precaution plans are constantly frustrated by the intervention of some unforeseen occurrence. The absolute accuracy of mathematical calculations depends upon their abstract nature; when applied to reality they become only approximately correct. Life is lived not in a laboratory, but in a world where uncertainty predominates as a primary condition of being. We are surrounded by effects of which the causes are shrouded in mystery; the unknown factor cannot be wholly eliminated.

The physicist even relies ultimately upon faith in believing that the universe is capable of coherent explanation, before he can discover a single principle or perform one successful experiment. The fact that the pyramid of science rests upon a basis of faith has been lost to view in the startling success which has attended its construction. The whole fabric of knowledge is erected in the clouds, yet the security with which it stands justifies its foundation.* In depending upon faith for the acceptance of spiritual truths we are making no unjustifiable assumption; if admitted in the one case it cannot reasonably be excluded from the other. Faith is the mainspring of all activity—from the smallest actions of every day life to the prosecution of gigantic enter-

* See 'Lux Mundi': Essay on Faith.

prises. It does not reason or philosophise, but compels: it does not question, because it knows. We perceive, and we feel sure. Where we cannot prove, we trust. And if by trusting we run a danger of delusion, it is worth the risk;

'It may be that the tides will wash us down,
It may be we shall reach the Happy Isles
And see the great Achilles whom we know.'

If we follow the scientist into the main branches of his work, we observe that his conclusions—materialistic to a certain point on account of the postulate upon which he proceeds, and the limits within which he works,—ultimately tend to endorse a belief in an unseen world.

First let us consider the mechanism of the universe. By faith in the constancy of nature science has revealed a prodigious network of law intersecting and penetrating everywhere. A dispassionate survey has made it clear that physical phenomena are not irregular or unintelligible, but that order and design prevail over confusion and disorder. A part of the tangled web has been unravelled. Every thread is bound to others by a vast concatenation of law: the causes of things are intelligible: that which appears supernatural is probably only an occurrence of which the corresponding cause has not been discovered. By establishing the regularity of nature science banishes the idea of unnatural interferences,

or series of interferences, on the part of a Creator, and those who regard Divine interference in the machinery of the universe as a religious postulate are naturally chagrined. The phenomena, to which they had been accustomed to point in proof of their beliefs, are now shown to be normal, and to this extent the verdict of science is hostile.

But it is hard to see how the fact of a rational cosmos, pursuing its ordered way in harmony and proportion, can afford any sound reason for denying the existence of a Divine Being. It is true that in so far as an unceasing supervision is no longer necessary the need of a mechanic, as God, has become proportionately less urgent. But with this new conception has disappeared that grotesque notion of Deity, rearranging and readjusting His clumsy handiwork which threatens to run out of gear and to come to a standstill, if left unattended. It is surely more fitting to believe in a God Who from the beginning conceived things as they were to be in their fulness of perfection. The law of causation may dispense with intermittent directions on the part of the Creator, but the difficulty of accounting for physical phenomena still remains. The problem is only removed one stage further back. It is still necessary to explain not merely the existence of a universe, but the existence of a universe every corner of which reveals traces of a mind. From what source did it originate? Whose

mind is reflected within it? If we assume that it was the Mind of God, we do no violence to the uniformity of nature which science has revealed. The will-power of man, an unoriginated first cause, already provides an exception to the law of causation, and it cannot be an unlawful extension of this exception to assume a supreme will which also transcends the compass of causality. The conception of an intelligent Being to account for a rational universe is no more unwarranted than the postulate of ether to account for the transmission of light.

And not only is a complex yet harmonious arrangement observable in the world of things, but also a purpose. The cosmos is something more than an automaton; it is an organism composed of millions of subsidiary organisms, each inspired by a teleology. That which seems to be an end in itself becomes a means to a further end. Every fragment of nature—from the markings of a pebble on the sea shore or the delicate tracery of a leaf to the structure of animals and the conformation of the stars—endeavours to fulfil its ideal and attain perfection, at the same time combining for the perfection of a larger unit. Myriads of infinitesimal units each pursue their respective ends and join in turn to form other more complex units which also have a perfection to which they strive. What is this purpose immanent in nature? Can it be that this patient striving

never finds fulfilment?—that the teleology of the universe remains unsatisfied? Is it unreasonable to suppose that this growing organism has somewhere a consummation; that every part complete in itself is a link in a golden chain, a golden thread in the multiform tapestry of life, that the pattern is woven for a purpose, and that the Master-Weaver is God?

If we proceed to examine the substance of things we find little encouragement of a materialistic creed. Theories as to the ultimate composition of objects have passed through many phases; and although perhaps the mystery of their nature will never be satisfactorily solved, certain results have been achieved. The atom, which at one time was thought to be the smallest conceivable unit, is now subdivided and decomposed into electrons and ions, themselves unsubstantial. Matter now appears to be only a coherence of centres of attraction, a series of actions and reactions, a congeries of magnetic forces whose substantiality depends upon their conjunction. The forms and combinations assumed by these forces constantly change. Nothing is permanent but the essence of things, which alone is imperishable and indestructible. Decay is the relaxation or detension of these forces. Nothing can spring into being or cease to exist. Solids are deceptive, their forms evanescent, their substantiality conditional. In the very

act of grasping that which is tangible and of saying—'This is my God. This is to me the only reality. This I can know, enduring, satisfying,'—with a puff of wind the tangibility is gone and the hand grasps thin air. Of all things in this life sensuous objects seem to be most real, and yet science declares that they are utterly uncertain and elusive; that the unseen is the only permanent reality.

And this pronouncement is confirmed by human instinct. Something unchanging is discerned behind the forms of things, which perhaps accounts for the irresistible fascination that natural beauty exercises upon the mind. From time immemorial man has recognised a Divine element in nature, perceiving that the universe "is bound by gold chains about the feet of God."* Greek mythology abounds in deities of wood and stream and hill: the legendary gods of Rome were for the most part nature-gods. In Egypt Ra was probably a god of the sun, a common object of worship in the East. Fire also figured prominently in primitive religions:—in India and Persia, personified as Hephaestus in Greece, and as Vulcan at Rome. This historic fact of nature-worship among the peoples of the world, representing a universal consensus of observance, must rest upon some substratum of truth. "This so solid looking material world is a

* The argument that religious instinct is a monstrous delusion, based upon an ignorant and superstitious reverence of natural phenomena, is considered in Chapter V.

visual and tactual manifestation of God's power and presence."† Mountains, crags, blue sky, sun, clouds, storms, the murmur of waves, the smell of earth after rain, the morning star "coelo nitidissimus alto," a tear, a rainbow, cornfields on a hillside trembling in the sunlight,—are instinct with a spiritual vitality. An observation of Napoleon, interrupting a materialistic discussion of his officers, is an apt commentary on the efforts of the human brain to exclude the spiritual from nature;—'Très ingénieux, Messieurs:' then with a sweep of his arm towards the stars:—'mais qui est-ce qui a fait tout cela?'

Flickering shadows, too ethereal to grasp, are cast around by a mysterious Presence. The influence exercised by masses of insensate matter, the massive masonry of Tiryns, Mycenae, Stonehenge: the effect caused by gaunt relics of past ages, the Pyramids or the Coliseum: the wonder created by sculpture or painting: the awe produced by solemnity of cathedral or chapel: the thoughts inspired by tracery of roof and column and arch, by angel trumpeters of the organ, by mystery of windows:—can hardly be attributed to nothing but an emotional predisposition. The Greek philosopher was near the truth, ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ ὅλῳ μέμικται, and nearer still the Hebrew Psalmist: 'Whither shall I flee then from Thy Presence . . . ?' Immanent within the world

† Carlyle: 'Heroes and Hero-Worship.'

of solids and substances is a Force, the reality of whose presence arguments from the *minutiæ* of natural law have no power to invalidate.

Turning from the world of things to a study of man we perceive indications of the same truth. The doctrine of evolution which resulted from an examination of human antecedents has now been established beyond reasonable doubt. Probably no scientific discovery at the time of its publication ever caused a greater shock to preconceived ideas. It seemed as though an overpowering weapon had been placed in the hands of materialism, and that the divinity of human nature was imperilled. The conclusions of physiology were certainly startling in the extreme. Man was a development of an inferior and restricted form of life : human attributes were in the main the result of an evolutionary process. Each individual organism, it seems, reduplicates the main stages of the upward growth, and the human embryo assumes in successive phases features of the lancelet, fish, amphibia, and mammal forms. In the world below man reflections and potentialities of such development can be observed. Animals possess that consciousness which is the concomitant of life, accompanied by feelings of comfort and discomfort. This has developed in the case of man into self-consciousness, a sense of personal entity distinguished from the rest of creation. Animals also appear to have a

limited faculty of memory and reasoning; they show intelligence in their power of adaptation to a new environment,* and in their keenness of instinct, which is their most characteristic mode of mentation.†

However unpalatable an animal kinship may be to those who prize the nobility of human nature, the truth must be faced. We are bound by close ties to the animal world from which we have struggled, and every action is still influenced by the early history of the race. By what process the change was effected, or what intermediate stages occurred, remains unknown. The course of progress was probably spasmodic, and not continuous. Retrogressive movements retarded the general advance; undulations varied the curve of evolution.

Yet undue emphasis may be laid upon the scientific fact. In spite of points of contact there is acute divergence. Phenomena of human personality,—self-consciousness, intellect, moral sense, self-determination—are far removed from the comparatively crude rationality of the animal kingdom. Beast and man, although in some respects akin, in others stand at opposite poles of creation. On the one side it would seem that a single link would make the chain of evolution complete; on the

* According to Romanes.

† According to Pouchet and Morgen those animals which possessed the most powerful instincts were the most intelligent.

other, that no bond of union, however great, could span the distance. The chasm which divides the most intelligent animal from the most debased of savages is after all enormous, and the points of disparity are even more pronounced than those of correspondence. Idealism is an integral part of humanity. The virtue which we regard as the most admirable is that of self-sacrifice.* All that is most distinctively characteristic of human nature proceeds from an instinctive reverence of moral standards and estimations. †Within each human being is an Influence directing and advising irrespective of circumstances, locality, or temporal conditions. A voice restrains, advises, warns. Its tones are not uncertain, but authoritative. It cannot be silenced by compulsion. It may be defied, but defiance is attended by remorse. It points to an unrealised ideal. Its desires are not those of natural inclination nor its warnings those of reason, for it frequently directs a course of action which appears diametrically opposed to worldly advantage. But although worldly wisdom may refuse obedience, It is invariably found to dictate that course of action afterwards acknowledged to be best. It cannot be the inheritance of the morality of past ages, because it impels to a standard of

* Embodied among the Greeks in the mythical portrait of Alcestis.

† The following description of conscience is based upon that given in "Lux Mundi," 15th edit., pp. 350-357.

action previously unrecognised. This phenomenon of the Moral Law seems irreconcilable with a purely materialistic account of the origin of man. How can such exalted conceptions be consistent with an animal nature? The secret surely is contained in this:—'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.'

The human frame may be explained by a process of evolution, but the phenomenal intellect or character presents difficulty to those who would reject the abnormal. Genius provides an element which science cannot analyse. That the mark of Divine nature is stamped upon the human race is attested by every nation and epoch. The consummate generalship of an Alexander or Hannibal; the intellectual aspirations of a Socrates or Plato; the literary inspiration of a Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles or Virgil; the artistic magnificence of a Pheidias; the political idealism and incorruptibility of a Pericles or Cato, proclaimed to the ancient world the mystery of human birth. And in later days neither intellectual acumen nor technical skill account for the Divina Commœdia of Dante, the Beatrix de Cenci of Guido Reni, the Madonna of Cimabue, the paintings of a Giotto or a Michael Angelo, the despairing sweetness of a Chopin, the unearthly grandeur of a Beethoven. No theory of chemical compounds or evolutionary physics can analyse the moral beauty of a St. Francis or the spirituality of a Newman. The

source of inspiration seems to be of another world. It presents old facts in a new and startling light, revealing in a moment of time an undying truth, instilling in the mind thoughts which surpass natural ability. It descends upon personality with energising power, thrilling every fibre of being. A divine fire, smouldering within, at times burns through the material envelope and scorches the world. In undaunted courage on the field of battle, in brilliance of intellect, in high artistic and literary achievement, in exalted ideals of statesmanship, in acts of heroism,—it is seen that the heart of the world pulsates with divinity, and that a spiritual exuberance courses through the arteries of human life.

And if we consider the theory of spontaneous generation, which for a long time was regarded as the corollary of the doctrine of evolution, we realise that something of the mystery which attaches to human character surrounds also the source and nature of life. It has been postulated by scientists and conceived by theorists that the chain, which joins the structure of the human frame to lower forms of life, might be extended to bridge the gulf dividing the organic from the inorganic world; that the phenomenon of life, God-given and God-sustained, might have originated in the fortuitous combination of certain chemical compounds which it lay within the power of science to reproduce. The possi-

bility of manufacturing synthetic life, although now no longer regarded as a necessary concomitant of the doctrine of evolution, is still propounded by eminent physicists. And here we must insist upon the primary importance of distinguishing between scientific fact and scientific hypothesis. No reasonable evidence has yet been adduced in support of the theory of spontaneous generation; while the doctrine of evolution is an ascertained fact of human history, the theory of spontaneous generation after a considerable lapse of time still remains a suggestion of the laboratory.

Yet even though the scientist should become able to extract life from the juxtaposition of certain particles, what would this indicate? The ingredients might be discovered, but the wonder of the process would still remain: the problem of its origin would not be solved, only postponed. Those particles were endowed with vital potentialities; how? According to science all subsequent attributes and tendencies are contained at least potentially in the primordial germ. The physicist would be the last to suppose that a nature could be transmitted *in toto* alien to the transmitting agent. Such a principle, if admitted, would not only upset the law of hereditary transmission, which forms the basis of the doctrine of evolution, but by introducing irregularity into the work of nature would threaten to wreck the scientific machinery. We must conclude that the spark

of life lurked from the beginning in the particles from which it sprang. And with this view the materialist must agree. The only alternative—to suppose that life appeared unaccountably from a foreign source,—is in his case untenable. His position is staked upon the conformity of nature, the absence of the inexplicable, and the validity of scientific conclusions. Again then, what was the source of those vital potentialities? By the production of life from apparently inanimate particles the material origin of the one would be demonstrated no more than the inherent vitality of the other. We should be justified in opposing to a material view the strong probability that potentialities of life pre-existed in the particles themselves.

Mind and matter appear to be integral, not derivative, aspects of being. The question is not so much,—Which of the two was antecedent?—as, What is the fundamental relation that unites them? And in order to solve the problem, the brain has been subjected to a systematic analysis with the result that an intimate connection has been established. The brain is pre-eminently the instrument of interpreting consciousness in a physical environment, giving expression to thought in the world of things. And upon its formation depends moral conduct to a certain extent. It has been shewn that improper development of the cortical area is responsible for certain

abnormalities of crime, sensuality, and madness. Attempts even have been made to assign to different portions their respective moral qualities. So far the evidence suggests undisguised materialism. But it is equally certain that every phenomenon of thought cannot be explained on material grounds. Human conviction emphatically asserts that consciousness is not entirely mechanical. There is a universal perception of an underlying self, independent of any physical organ, more real than its transient manifestations in the world of objects, deeper than intellectual faculties or sensuous experiences, unchanged by change of time or circumstance, the point at which body and soul meet in harmony, the one central reality in the flux of the universe. The presence of this underlying ego is indicated by such phenomena as the transmission of thought, the movement of ponderable bodies without material instrumentation, the reputed intensity of mentation recorded by persons rescued from drowning, hypnotism, trance and second sight. And beyond the borderland of science extends a vast series of phenomena whose very nature precludes certainty of verification. The day must come when the testimony of psychic forces can be overlooked no longer. Unhappily progress is retarded at present by unreasoning prejudice; investigators are accused of indulging an unholy curiosity, while those who have knowledge are not

encouraged to reveal it. The genuineness of many alleged phenomena are overshadowed by the impostures of charlatans, and it is too often forgotten that no science is necessarily discredited because accompanied by ninety-nine per cent. of legerdemain.

It would seem that there are two modes of mental activity. In the first—or intellectual mode—realities percolate to the mind through a restricted channel, being limited and selected by the rigid concepts of the brain. In the second—or intuitive mode—the flow of impressions is uninterrupted and direct. The mind, though intimately connected with, is not inherent in any one organ of the body but immanent throughout the whole being. Thus the convictions of intuition, in that they proceed from unrestricted communication with the ultimate consciousness, are as trustworthy as the moulded conclusions of the intellect. Fundamental apprehensions of life are seen to be intuitive rather than intellectual, and the importance of faith becomes intelligible.

Materialists, overlooking or deliberately disregarding those phenomena which are inconvenient to their purpose, have misappropriated the pronouncement of psychologists as to the union of mind and brain, endeavouring to build upon this statement a theory of purely mechanical mentation. Impression waves have been postulated similar to light and sound waves, which strike the brain and cause

cerebral excitement, this excitement resulting in thought and action. In other words not only that thought is a product of a material organ but that morality is mechanical, neither affected by human volition nor attended by responsibility. This is a typical example of an unfair use of fact to bolster up preconceptions, and its effect is to confuse the ascertained discoveries of scientists with the unbridled conjectures of pseudo-scientific theorisers. 'Ce sont eux qui jettent sur la pensée un voile noir à travers lequel le monde apparaît comme un cimetière.'* And the danger of confusion is the greater because the theory is supported by a substratum of truth; only a close examination reveals that the fallacy lies in what is suppressed. To assume that the circumscribed area of physical study pretends to embrace the whole range of life, or that the laboratory claims to give the last word on all phenomena of existence, is to mistake the very function of science. The attention of the physicist, as we have seen, is rigidly concentrated upon the world of objects: the domain of the immaterial is excluded from investigation. Concepts of time, space, and causation, have been postulated in order to study physical phenomena, and as far as physical phenomena are concerned such concepts are real. But to utilise these instruments in order to analyse and dissect the mind, of which they are the pro-

* Edouard Schuré: 'Du Sphinx au Christ.'

ducts, and for a purpose other than that for which they were formed, is a glaring violation of cardinal principles and introduces a vicious circle. If the physicist, who has every right to probe the brain and to pronounce it with reservation mechanical, extended his arguments to the underlying personality he would be acting *ultra vires*. The self and will transcend laws of causality. The mind is the master, not the minion, of time and sequence.

The work of science has proved invaluable, and its generalisations are accepted gratefully as a step nearer the truth. But if inviolability were claimed for every discovery, if universality instead of generality were demanded for its principles, if hypothesis were placed in the forefront of knowledge, then progress and truth alike would be menaced. While recognising therefore the uniformity of nature, we observe traces of a Mind and of a Purpose. While admitting the doctrine of evolution, we reserve the right to reject the dubious supposition that matter was antecedent to life. In accepting the theory of natural selection with its doctrine of the survival of the fittest, we refuse to believe the conjecture that the presence of those characteristic features, which constituted the supremacy of one type over another, was accidental. And lastly, while acknowledging the relationship of brain and thought, we contend that the assumption which

regards one as the product of the other is unwarrantable.

An impartial consideration of available evidence, however inadequate, surely indicates that beyond the region mapped out by science there stretches a vast tract of country which cannot reasonably be excluded from any comprehensive survey of life. The honest results of scientific research instead of discrediting reveal something of the wonder of this spirit kingdom. In the very act of disregarding spiritual influences, science becomes a finger-post pointing to that road which the feet of every traveller treads. Materialism, deriving its strength from conjecture, shrivels before facts. The visible manifestations of unseen forces may be formulated in precise phraseology, systematised in regularities of cause and effect, but the basic nature of those forces cannot be comprised within finite thought, nor their secrets learnt. Every discovery emphasizes unmistakably the power of the unseen. Natural laws and forces are invisible. A host of unknown influences baffle attempts to attain completeness of knowledge. In the complex yet ordered arrangement of the worlds the traces of a Mind can be discerned. Everywhere there is a Control, which guides, a Purpose to which things tend. The potentialities of mind, until recently insufficiently appreciated, have opened out a fresh prospect of the mobility of matter. Some-

thing of the truth grasped for centuries in the East is stealing over Western thought. Scientists are becoming increasingly aware of a sense of mystery in nature. Large gaps extend in the frontier of knowledge; enigmas, which appear insoluble, embarrass. Physical substances are analysed and resolved into ever smaller atoms, but the process of subdivision and decomposition ends in emptiness. There is a point beyond which human intellect cannot advance, and at which it must rest in trust.

If the chain forged by physical science were a perfect circle, complete in every link, without beginning and without end, that circle would still have a centre about which it revolved. If we remove all extraneous influences, conceive the absence of any primary impellant Power, banish the goal to which nature moves, enthrone physical science with its laws of causation in absolute and uncontested sovereignty, its work is wrecked. The very success which crowned its labours would recoil upon it: its formularisations would be rendered meaningless: the coherence of the universe would become confounded by the unintelligibility of its existence. Without a belief in a Divine Being controlling the world for good, men become puppets, and life a grotesque mockery. Without trust in the ultimate destiny of human nature, human

energy is sapped by insincerity and dilettantism. Without the stimulus imparted by a higher authority than that of man, fatalism prevails in philosophy, realism in art, and a moral paralysis numbs the whole being. If the divine sonship of man is nothing more than a name, love and unselfishness are the diabolical contrivances of a fiend to induce hopes that can never be fulfilled. If the prospect of a future life is without foundation, an assumption of tranquillity or of happiness in the present becomes a mask which hides the shrunken face of a corpse: the infinite possibilities of being are reduced to the immutable routine of a mechanical, unsatisfying, sterile existence: death alone remains the hallmark of reality: the cosmos becomes chaos, and a stony cynicism its master key.

But we have not been left without signs of a Fatherly care watching over us, nor can we reasonably doubt the existence of a world more real and powerful than the world of sense. The Spirit treads lightly, but His footprints may be seen. His footfall, though hushed, is like the sighing of the wind. Creation is inspired by the mystery and life of his breath: the silences of the soul re-echo to the encouragement and warning of His voice. Every thing is animate with the great Spirit of God. Every creature thrills beneath the magic of His touch. Pyramids of matter melt before Him, like snow in sunshine; at His

approach the alleys of the world are peopled with the faces of the dead, . . . who live. Science, stretching forth her hands in the darkness, touches the hem of His robe. He it is "Whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere."* And if this truth should appear to be denied by scientific conclusions or human experience, it is because those conclusions or that experience is yet incomplete.

* Inge: 'Speculum Animæ.'

CHAPTER II

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SPIRITUAL

The spiritual then is a reality as essential to the completeness and intelligibility of life as the material, and we can now proceed to examine the relation which exists between these two elements. For practical purposes we differentiate between two worlds. The one is that of physical phenomena, the embodiment of law and order; the other—the incorporeal, illimitable realm of that which seems to occupy no space, whose manifestations are volatile, transcending the range of precise definition or analysis. What is the fundamental relationship uniting them? Are mind and matter, although apparently distinct, merely two aspects of the globe of life? Is the difference one of presentation only, consisting in the two processes of mental transmission involved? Do the incongruities, which they seem to present, ultimately find resolution in something combined of both—unknown *in rerum natura*? Have they one and the same source, or is this dualism radical and eternal? Much depends upon the answer, and in a subject where theory has necessarily

played a prominent part those indications and tendencies which can be drawn from the life that we know gain an additional importance.

In so far as human instincts are not fallacious it would seem that some profound truth or symbolism must be contained in a differentiation which common sense demands. And this assumption is corroborated by the success which has attended the isolation of material objects for the purpose of study. There is after all a real difference between that which belongs to space and time, and that which is independent of them; we regard an eclipse, for example, as of a completely different order of things to love. And yet although we perceive a distinction, nothing in the world around us gives reason to believe in any absolute separation of these two elements. Experience shows that neither one nor the other is ever found in isolation; that wherever the properties of the one are present, there also are the potentialities or activities of the other. In fact there is an unceasing interpenetration of mind and matter, and they seem only to be found in combination.* Matter itself is inconceivable apart from a mental connection, while masses of so-called inanimate substances, from the intelligent coherence displayed in their arrangement and from the irresistible appeal which they make to the

*See Illingworth: 'Personality Human and Divine,' pp. 208, 209.

human mind, appear saturated by a spiritual essence. This Intelligence, immanent in nature, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, 'is not something external to the scheme, clumsily interfering with it by muscular action,—but is something within and inseparable from it,' and again, 'something indwelling and all pervading and not absent anywhere.'† Melodies are immanent in the strings of the instrument from which they proceed. Celestial phenomena, though belonging to a material order of things, are primarily associated with mind. And in the dissection of solids we learn that the visible is intimately allied with the invisible, the ephemeral aspects of objects with their indestructible essence.*

And if we consider man, the surest example upon which we can base any knowledge, we observe that mental and physical activities require a continual interaction of mind and body. Every action of the one presupposes the influence of the other; every condition of the one reacts upon the condition of the other. Every movement of the body involves a mental process, while mental excitement or depression is attended by a corresponding elation or exhaustion of the physical system. The personality, or character, or soul, tends to mould the corporal tissue, expressing itself in lineament of face, in texture of skin, in

† 'The Substance of Faith,' p. 72.
*p. 28.

conformation of hand. Temperament and emotion are indicated by expression and gesture: attitudes of the body in worship reflect certain conditions of the soul. The converse also is true that character is profoundly influenced by environment. Even love, as we know it, must be love of some one or of something: the material element cannot be entirely eradicated. The soul, though not identical with, is immanent in the body, and whatever the gulf may be which seems at times to divide the one from the other it is not more real than that which divides tragedy from comedy, or laughter from tears.

If the truth of this conjunction appears to be denied by the discriminating faculties of thought, or by exigencies of language, it must be remembered that mental and verbal definitions are purely mechanical contrivances. A hard and fast line of classification can be drawn in the mind, precise areas assigned, rigid boundaries and characteristics apportioned, but these have only a relative value in fact. Terms such as 'matter' and 'spirit' express merely a certain mental diagnosis, differentiating between that which belongs to space and time, and that which does not. But when applied to reality the accuracy of these definitions becomes only approximate for this reason. No material object, as far as we know, is a thing simply of space and time—its formal presentation may be transient, but its essence

is imperishable:—while no suprasensuous manifestation, of which we can have any knowledge, fails to find a point of contact with the world of things. All absolute distinctions therefore are permissible only as a mental convenience. In the world in which we live the two spheres commingle and intertwine with inexhaustible variety of combination,—now one predominating, now the other. They blend and fade imperceptibly so that the precise point of transition cannot be marked; but it would seem that interaction is always present, that they are completely soluble only in thought, indissoluble in actuality.

If we inquire further as to the nature of this link, we find that it consists in the ministerial function of the material element, which appears to have no end in itself and whose purpose is subservience of the spiritual. Matter is only instrumental to the fulfilment of something beyond. The physical universe, instinct with a spiritual vitality, is pervaded by a restless teleology, refusing to be satisfied with its own perfection and striving upwards. Substances exist as a medium of expression and gravitate to a spiritual centre. The abstract is for application to the concrete: the strings of an instrument to give voice to the harmonies within them. The world of things is not only an essential factor in the development of life, but also a channel to reflect certain attributes of Deity:—'The heavens declare the glory of

God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.' Though having no goal in material objects the spirit finds in the obedient co-operation of matter an element necessary to its self-realisation. It is in this need of a vehicle of expression on the one side and in obedience on the other that the inseparability of matter and spirit consists. The air of supreme importance which attaches to the physical world and the disproportionate appeal which it makes to the senses is a delusion encouraged by the immaturity of man's spiritual faculties. No mass is so colossal that it cannot be grasped by the immensity of thought. The spiritual is the central reality: the material only secondary and subordinate.

And this conclusion is supported by human experience. The brain is for the transmission of thought: the body for the fulfilment of that thought in action. The purpose of an earth life is the development of human personality, the cultivation of love. The body not only is united with, but exists for, the soul. There can be no doubt that the normal relation of one to the other is that of obedience. The soul governs, the body serves.—'The end of man is the full development of his being in that symmetry and proportion which nature has assigned it, and such a development implies that the supreme, the predominant motive of his life, should be moral. If in any society or individual this ascendancy does not

exist, that society or that individual is in a diseased and abnormal condition.'* And the mark of a normal and proportionate development is the practice of unselfishness, which is not only a sign of moral health but also a vital factor in moral progress. Just as every unit in the universe strives to reach its own perfection only in order that it may minister to the purpose of a wider whole, of which it forms an integral part, so the development of the individual is not an end in itself but only for the service of others. The mysterious interdependence of human personalities renders an isolated self-concentration unnatural; harmonisation of soul and body issues in a spirit of self-sacrifice. Experience has shown that unselfishness is a bond of union, the greatest cohesive force in the universe; that no virtue is more admirable or has a greater power of preserving, elevating, purifying: that no fire burns with so white-hot an intensity as the fire of an unselfish love.

Conversely, selfishness is the most destructive force in the world.† It is a sign of a moral degenerate and the outcome of a diseased moral state, and the pursuit of earthly objects for the sole purpose of self-gratification, implying not only the prostitution of man's higher faculties but a contradiction of the natural order, is disastrous in result. A

* Lecky. 'History of European Morals.' Vol. 1, p. 115.
† cf. Plato Symp: 191-211.

prolonged self-absorption entails loss of sympathy with things and people. As soon as the stimulus of external forces is withdrawn, self-realisation is rendered impossible: the personality becomes dwarfed, disintegrates, dissolves. It was through the transformation of a patriotic crusade into an ambitious project of self-aggrandisement that the life of Napoleon, at one time bright with promise, set in darkness. It was owing to the sacrifice of the highest intellectual and artistic genius to the bewitching glamour of the sensuous that the period of Hellenic citizenship was short-lived. A policy of self-indulgence, whether in nations or individuals, is a policy of national and individual suicide. If human life is to be natural and proportioned the moral principle must be in the ascendant; and the basis as well as the criterion of moral ascendancy is a spirit of unselfishness. The purpose of such a life will be the development of the underlying personality or soul,—the nucleus of being, the point at which the manifold activities of life unite in harmony, the primal ego undivided into particular functions of reason, feeling, or will,—in order that it may add its impetus to the impulse of the universe. And material organs contribute to this process of development and expansion by pouring in upon the central being through the channels of the senses a constant stream of impressions and influences from the world

of things, which impart vitality and a principle of growth.

As we watch the various kingdoms of nature,—from the lowest strata where spiritual energy is for the most part potential, through the rising scale of existence,—we observe that the spiritual element becomes increasingly prominent, appearing in the life of the plant world, developed in animal instinct and consciousness, and culminating in the fully developed intellectual and moral faculties of human life. Simultaneous with this steady internal growth we perceive an increased complexity of physical organisms and an additional power of adaptability in order to conform with the changed conditions. Lastly, in the kingdom of man the subordination of bodily functions to the furtherance of a spiritual purpose in accordance with the law of the universe has become for the first time a conscious act. Thus every thing and being exists for the service of something beyond itself. And as the scale of creation rises the possibility of co-operating in the scheme of things increases with increase of spiritual energy, ranging from the unconscious assistance of the inorganic world to the conscious participation of the world of man.

It is not unnatural that we should attempt to draw from these principles which obtain in the world that we know some indications as to the reality or conditions of an after-life.

But we cannot do more than shadow possibilities. All theories if pressed to their final conclusion must prove a *reductio ad absurdum.* It is impossible for us who look from this side of the barrier, armed with concepts of time and space, and perplexed by dualistic perceptions, to apply such instruments with any certainty to a state or condition of being to which such concepts can have only a limited, if any true, application. Fish, if endowed with intelligence, might make certain observations as to the principles governing the water in which they lived. They might even formulate theories as to a state of life in which water did not figure as the predominating element. But owing to the restrictions of their environment their deductions could bear very little relation to the condition of things obtaining in Oxford Circus. Even such opinions as they might form, if combated by some keenly developed piscine intellect, could be proved according to aquatic logic irrational and absurd. Yet we know that life is lived on dry land, and that it is more expansive than life in the ocean; we see the element of water recede while that of air takes its place. As the conditions of life in the deep are revolutionised on land, so by some harmonisation or modification of the relations of matter and spirit an earthly existence may be transformed into a spiritual state.

We cannot assume that man is the con-

summation of the universe; at this stage soul and body are so evenly balanced that the scale oscillates uncertainly. It would seem that some ultimate relationship must prevail not only on this planet, but beyond. The ever increasing ascendancy of the spirit foreshadows supramundane spheres where its faculties are infinitely more extensive, and bodies infinitely more adaptive, than is possible on earth; where the two transmuted into one indistinguishable entity give a perfect reflection of the soul. It is only through the weakness of human nature that the two elements appear at variance. We are justified in believing that there is a point at which the discord is resolved, that 'there is some comprehensive unity where the complex attributes of mind and matter find solution in touch with the eternal Mind of the Creator.' And the conception of God as the Centre of this great series of concentric circles, the Pivot of the universe, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Infinite, Whose Essence is Spirituality, from Whom issue all things and to Whom all things are tending, does no violence to laws or principles operating *in rerum natura* but rather is their inevitable and rational fulfilment.

At this point it would be well to review the ground which we have traversed. We have seen that although human thought distinguishes two elements in the world of which we have experience there is no reason to believe that

the one exists apart from the other, but rather that there is an endless conjunction and interpenetration. Further, that the function of matter is service of the spiritual, whether it be the unconscious assistance of the animal kingdom and of the kingdoms below the animal, fulfilling the law of their being in accordance with the dictates of nature, or whether it be the conscious effort of rational humanity. And lastly, that through the various strata of existence there is an increasing predominance of the spiritual and a corresponding complexity and adaptability of the material: this it is only reasonable to suppose finds somewhere in the region above and beyond man a final consummation. In order to complete this survey it now remains to consider what relation the laws of the physical kingdom bear to the apparently irregular manifestations of the suprasensuous world.

We can hardly believe that in the ascending scale of the universe an ordered arrangement gives place to disordered confusion, or that the system of things becomes increasingly irrational, but rather that the Divine Mind reveals a still greater wonder and intricacy of operation. And signs that a regulating principle still obtains in the spiritual world, corresponding to the conformities of the world of things, are found in the requirements of will. Personality, although transcending physical laws, is conditioned by the wills of

other personalities which demand acquiescence or at least recognition. These external wills range from those of companions and associates to the highest will in the universe, voiced by conscience and stamped upon nature,—the Will of God. Abnormal manifestations, apparently irreconcilable with the operations of the physical world, are not on that account discredited, nor are they necessarily antagonistic to known laws As supremacy is asserted over material conditions by human will, so we may suppose those conditions can be suspended or superseded, without being overthrown, by the supreme Will; it is merely the superimposition of a higher stratum of law upon a lower. Every phenomenon of life, as an expression of that Will, must in its widest aspect be natural: the myriad radiations have a common centre.

To assign a supernatural origin to any occurrence is nothing but a confession of ignorance as to the corresponding cause. The province of the natural is constantly being enlarged by new discoveries, and this enforces the conclusion that the bounds which separate it from the supernatural exist only in finite conception. We are little more than spectators. Our knowledge even of the visible world is comparatively meagre, and apparent incongruities may well harmonise in that region which lies beyond our present vision. We suffer from our position. If we could obtain

a comprehensive view of the workings of the spiritual kingdom we should perceive the harmonious design: but stationed pin-points in the immensity of space, with infinity encircling us, we can only hope to catch glimpses of reasons and principles as they pass before our eyes. We observe threads in the gigantic web of life, interlacing, intersecting, diverging, overlapping, in bewildering complexity, but we are not always able to distinguish the symmetrical pattern.

In spite of superficial dissimilarities the same Will has dictated this vast concatenation of law extending from physical generalisations to moral requirements. Those principles which obtain in the lower kingdoms of nature, where the material element predominates, are naturally more rigid than in the higher kingdoms, where a pronounced spiritual element brings greater variety and elasticity. Although at first there seems to be a radical difference, a closer inspection shows that the old method has only been incorporated and expanded in a new. The union which exists between the realm of things and the realm of spirit is so intimate that every generalisation and phenomenon of the one would seem to have a corresponding reality in the other; every discovery of the one to reveal something as to the conditions of the other. The two worlds are interwoven with the same underlying principles. There is a process of

spiritual evolution, of spiritual growth, of spiritual selection, a spiritual teleology. History records a regular development of the religious instinct of man as marked as the evolution of the physical frame.* Spiritual faculties ripen not instantaneously but by a gradual process; 'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' A natural selection eradicates functions which fail to conform with their spiritual environment; those which are more adaptable are not only preserved but strengthened. Use brings increase, disuse atrophy, to the powers of the soul as well as to the limbs of the body; to him that has is given and from him that has not is taken even that which he seems to have. A spiritual teleology demands the development of spiritual life not as an end in itself but as a means to further the universal welfare; both worlds are welded together by a striving towards a far-off consummation. Sustinence, nourishment, discipline, rest, exercise, are as necessary to the one as to the other. The travail, pain, decay of the body find their counterpart in the birthpangs, remorse, death-agony of the soul.*

And so the order of the physical kingdom is reflected in the world above, the rigidity of material consistencies becoming more plastic until by a gradual process of transition they

* See Chapter V.

* See Drummond: 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World.'

culminate in the requirements of will. We can trace the operations of law to the borders of the unseen, and mark their transformation as they are merged in higher conditions. As each law passes from kingdom to kingdom it is widened in operation, though still the same law;† and stretching upwards to the threshold of the spirit world finally disappears shrouded in that mysterious darkness which surrounds the physical no less than the spiritual region.

The position of man, hemmed in on every side by this network of regulations, is at first one of bondage. Disaster following rebellion teaches that the commands of the material world are inexorable. The requirements of a higher law also are half-unconsciously realised, although it is found that up to a certain point those requirements may be disregarded with comparative impunity. But as man passes from primitive savagery the restriction of physical law relaxes. Recognised as vital to existence it no longer rises at every step of the journey like some gaunt spectre with relentless 'thou shalt not,' but is appropriated and surpassed. Humanity is henceforth free as regards those laws because it has acquiesced in their necessity; 'ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.' Further, it is learnt that disobedience to that higher law is not an exercise of will, but an exhibition of self-will: that continued disobedience results not in

† e.g. The inarticulate noises of animals become speech in man, the immobility of matter is endowed with pliability and movement.

freedom but in slavery, even as disregard of physical law brings death instead of life. In both spheres conformity to law alone constitutes freedom: capricious exercise of human will means ultimately the loss of will. Unbridled indulgence, unrestrained appetite, extravagant luxury, are all tributary streams of the deep, fast flowing torrent of passion, in whose rapids all freedom is for ever lost, whose vehemence no banks can stem or swimmer resist, which pours its waters into the ocean of death.

Human will is circumscribed, its apparent freedom limited; but those limits, if recognised, disappear. The walls of the prison recede, the prison becomes a world, and the world a universe of unfettered activity. But the self-willed finds that he is confined in a contracting cage, the bars of which close about him cramping his every action; and these gnawing into his flesh like iron shackles at last twine about his neck and choke the life out of him. True freedom is not capriciousness of action or the satisfaction of every whim, but the gradual identification of self with the Will of God. 'My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me.' Thus the perfect personality will know no restraints because itself will have become the embodiment of law. Life on earth or elsewhere is nothing but an assimilation of the Divine Will; and the law of progress, whether taught by scientists, philosophers, or Christ, is obedience.

CHAPTER III

SIN AND SUFFERING

Although the governing motive of the universe is spiritual, and a wholesome condition of being can only be attained by the subordination of material impulses, acquiescence in the system of things may be refused: —and herein lies the tragedy of the human kingdom. That Will, which demands implicit obedience from the lower scales of existence, for the first time admits the possibility of disobedience in the case of man. And God's Purpose would seem to be this.

The faculties of self-consciousness and of reason, the sense of responsibility and power of initiative, which are distinctive of humanity, mark a new and critical stage. The point has now been reached at which the involuntary obedience of the world below man no longer contains within itself sufficient dynamic force to ensure further advance; it cannot of itself give adequate expression to the expanding powers of the spirit. The stimulus of opposition, the refining influence of self-mortification and of self-surrender, have now become necessary to the fulness of spiritual life. And

as man emerges from the animal state with the dawning light of a new knowledge in his eyes, he no longer blindly follows that universal law which demands the service of every faculty in the progressive impulse of nature; he has become aware of a power of self-determination, which makes it possible to participate voluntarily and intelligently in this great movement at the same time as it introduces the possibility of refusal and failure. If that freedom which has replaced a mechanical conformity is to be of disciplinary value, reasonable opportunity must be afforded for the exercise of self-will: and in misuse of the deliberative faculty lies an element of discord and opposition.

The contention that sin implies nothing but the absence of good would seem to be inadequate. It is not only the adoption of a wrong course of action as opposed to a right, but the deliberate and unrestricted choice of that which tends to promote the convenience of self rather than the welfare of others. It is the conscious identification of personal interest, contrary to the dictates of nature and of reason, with the seeming pleasure of the moment; the wide powers of life are focussed upon the single point of self. Moral evil is something more than a relative term. It is not only a miscalculation as to the respective values of contending pleasures, or what has been termed 'a false moral arithmetic,' but

signifies the presence of a positive, organic mischief, the wilful perversion of the relation of soul and body, rebellion against the sovereignty of the spirit, the subordination of divine powers to worldly ends. And by abuse of that very faculty which distinguishes him from the rest of creation man sets his face against the natural order and becomes the great exception. While the world of nature pursues its appointed course, man stands alone in the neglect of his duty setting his will in defiance to that of the Creator. 'The animal creation has a law of its being . . . which it instinctively and invariably pursues. Man has a law of his being . . . which he instinctively tends to disobey.'* By a neglect of spiritual obligation, by a squandering of spiritual energy on self-gratification, humanity is disregarding the cardinal principle of life, and in violating a law which is violated nowhere else comes into antagonism with the Divine Will.

The effects of so unnatural a condition of being, although at first hardly perceptible, are ultimately deadly as must be the case in all acts of insubordination against supreme authority. The taint of indulgence corrodes the moral sensibilities, and the sense of the proportion of things is lost. An enervation paralyses power of initiative; the soul loses self-assertion, and if no antidote is forthcoming becomes atrophied. The spiritual

*Illingworth in 'Lux Mundi.'

bankrupt is a retrogressive. He reverts to a lower type—to the brute—and the tide of progress for the moment is stemmed to the detriment of the individual and the race. And not only is sin a step backward, it increases the difficulty of the next step forward. Unnatural influences accumulate: values become distorted by an obliquity of moral vision. Through an exuberance of animal passion the intoxicating allurements of the senses seem more desirable than the pursuit of a shadowy ideal, with the result that body and soul become strained by strife, antipathies and dissensions prevail instead of concord and peace. The travail of the earth extended over an enormous period of time in preparation for the birth of man, who was to continue the work of evolution; but man has failed to play the part assigned to him; his sphere of usefulness is confined, his faculties cramped. And yet this failure is not utterly ignominious or irretrievable. In the act of sinning man has shewn the wonder and possibilities of human nature, and the cause of disaster contains also the promise of success. The determination with which the struggle is maintained must one day for ever stay the oscillations of the balance by restoring soul and body to a lasting unity. The borders of the human kingdom have not yet been flung to their widest extent. Domains and empires stretching beyond the physical

world, from which he is debarred at present by immaturity, await man's coming.

In considering the question of sin we must take into account the apparent inconsistency existing between the scientific account of man's ascent from the animal world and the Biblical account of a fall. Whereas biology regards man as the supreme development of ages of evolution, theology sees in him a partial failure. In the one case sin is the inevitable result of inexperience; in the other of wilful perversity. From the one point of view sin ushers in a new and brilliant epoch, signifying that the animal stage of instinctive action is passing away: from the other it is a terrible lapse of human nature and attended by far-reaching consequences. In any attempt to reconcile these two different aspects it must be remembered—first, that the course of evolution, though in the main upward, was irregular; secondly, that Adam, though sinless, was physically and spiritually undeveloped; and thirdly, that the narrative of man's temptation and fall, as given in Genesis, is strictly allegorical. It is in this last consideration that the difficulty or solution lies:—difficulty, if a literal meaning is insisted upon; solution, if interpreted according to its obvious character. The truth which the allegory would seem to convey is that sin is a direct act of disobedience; it is hardly fair to press parallelisms in

detail. The biological and theological points of view then are supplementary, as always. The one, which regards moral evil as the precursor of a new era of progress and as the unavoidable consequence of an animal ancestry, though true to a certain extent, is inadequate in that it fails to take account of human initiative. This defect is corrected by the other which declares that at some point in the course of evolution, as man stood at the dawn of human history with a newly awakened consciousness and a nascent sense of responsibility, his powers were equal to the task of regulating the fierce instincts of animal passion; but that in defiance of the ruling motive of the universe he wilfully identified himself with the sensuous rather than the spiritual.

As to the immediate effects of sin upon others, it can hardly be denied that criminal weakness or neglect transmits to those who follow an increased strength of bodily appetite and a weakened power of resistance. Each individual by sin adds something to the load which humanity already has to bear, and so makes the time of emancipation more remote.

The whole question of moral evil is intimately affected by the possible existence of personifications of evil, and it would appear that the pendulum of modern thought inclines again to a belief in the reality of devils. The torments of disease, the terrors of the unknown

in childhood, the dread that is experienced in trance, mental perversions, moral and physical wreckage, the diabolical malignity with which mankind is enticed and tortured,—such things as these seem to demand in explanation the activity of devilish agents. At times their unclean presences can almost be felt, and the noisome touch of their wings produces a shuddering recoil. And the conception of embodiments of evil is not in itself unreasonable. Misuse of bodily faculties on earth may well be followed, not only by a corruption of personality as a natural consequence, but by a continuation after death of a diseased existence apart from a body. Continued disembodiment may be the inevitable penalty of earthly depravity. Such corrupted personalities or devils would avail themselves of any opportunity to gain control over a human frame, and signs of their activity may be seen in the phenomenon of possession. Here the individual personality seems to be submerged beneath the dominating influence of some malicious being, and the phenomenon of plural personality ensues during which the victim speaks sometimes in his own person, sometimes in that of the controlling agent. The exact nature of the connection between soul and body and the way in which that link is regulated by the underlying ego is unknown. But it appears that in good actions there is a sympathetic co-operation of the elements of

personality,—a co-operation of intellect, affection and will,—while in malevolent action the various elements are disunited, engendering friction. When the ego or underlying principle itself is diseased the whole machinery of being with its complex nervous system would be thrown out of gear, and the link strained to its utmost. If an external personality supervened under such conditions it might well appropriate to itself supreme control.

The most striking examples of possession are the cases of demoniacs recorded in the Gospels; and as the whole problem of evil and of evil beings is profoundly affected by them, we must be allowed to anticipate the logical sequence by considering here a few characteristics of those cases. It is sometimes stated that instances of dual personality found in asylums at the present time can be satisfactorily accounted for on purely physiological grounds, as the result of some cerebral derangement; further, that the symptoms of the demoniac boy cured by Christ after the descent of the Mount of Transfiguration would be diagnosed to-day as epilepsy. But it must be remembered that modern cases of lunacy and mental abnormality afford no exact parallel to those of the Gospels; and this fact, far from impugning the veracity of the writers, admits of an obvious psychic explanation. The unique Personality of Christ, which drove the possessing agents into paroxysms of fear,

was the direct cause of the typical features of those cases. It revealed something of sin's inner nature which under normal conditions is hidden. If no exactly identical symptoms have been observed in later days it is because no human personality is sufficiently commanding to pierce the outer layers of semblance and stir the deep pools of being.

And in so far as Christ unquestionably had an unexampled knowledge of the forces and conditions of the unseen world, His attitude towards the powers of evil, and in particular towards demoniacs, must carry exceptional authority. Those tormented with devils held the current Jewish belief that they were actually possessed. Apart from all question whether Christ's acquiescence in a traditional view must necessarily authorise and substantiate that view, He undoubtedly supports this belief by His words and methods of cure. His whole treatment of demoniacs presupposes a devilish possession. The word, by which the cure is effected, is invariably addressed to the evil spirit as opposed to the patient. On the side of the sufferer there is never a request to be healed, as in nearly every case of those afflicted with bodily infirmities. This coincides with the theory that power of personal initiative is lost. And the symptoms of the malady point to the same conclusion. The phenomenon of multiple personality is marked; —'Mary, out of whom were cast seven devils';

'Legion, for *we* are many.' The possessed speaks sometimes in his own person, sometimes in that of the possessing agent. It was something beyond a mere subjective affliction; the devils existed apart from the patient: they could be transferred and work havoc elsewhere :* they might return sevenfold.† There is an almost universal recognition and terror of Christ's Divine authority, which are present in no other cases. Such characteristics appear incompatible with theories of delusion, epilepsy, or purely physical derangement, and point to some deeper cause of horror.

But nothing reveals the intrinsic nature of moral evil more plainly than the misery which it brings in its train. It would seem that the primary purpose of suffering is penal: that the world's sin entails the world's suffering, and that these—the only discordant notes in the harmony of the universe—being the result of man's reckless perversity are ultimately cause and effect. Suffering, both mental and bodily, is a sign of the supreme revolt of nature against unnatural conditions, and such sympathy exists between body and soul that the disease of the one cannot be without effect upon the other; the feelers of a spiritual cancer pierce their way into the physical frame. The Hebrews recognised this connection of moral and physical evil, regarding leprosy as a

* The incident of the Gadarene swine.

† The parable of the wandering Spirit.

symbol of spiritual death. It was also ratified by Christ when He forgave the sins of the man with palsy preparatory to his physical cure. He knew that it was useless to cure the body when the soul remained in an unhealthy condition; alleviation could only be temporary and would be followed by a recrudescence of the complaint in a more malignant form than before. The same idea finds expression in the puzzled question of the bystanders, who seeing a man born blind ask, 'Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?' Christ's answer—'Neither, but that the glory of God might be manifested'—has sometimes been interpreted as a refutation of all theories that would connect moral and physical evil. Such an interpretation however is not required by the context, and in fact would be inconsistent with His attitude on other occasions. He rather points to a higher purpose, deprecating the narrow view which can see in pain and misery nothing but a penalty of corruption.

Yet if suffering is the consequence of guilt, why are the innocent punished? Is it consistent with the benevolence of an omnipotent Being that any of His creatures should suffer undeserved agony? How can the word 'good' in any sense be applied to a system of creation in which men's bodies warp and rot with nameless diseases? where in a moment of time honour degenerates to shame and beauty to filth? from which countless hordes of victims

are remorselessly exacted to glut the ravening lust of volcano and earthquake and sea? where vice and intrigue apparently flourish, while venial lapses are visited with a deadly judgment? where a hideous trafficking prevails in human merchandise? where ignorantly the innocent plunge into a morass of sin from which there is no return? where body is ruined —and who shall say whether soul or not?— through the poison of heredity? Who can tell the number of those whose lives are wrecked by the excesses of others, whose one inheritance is a ghastly legacy of pain? Such grim spectres are hurried out of sight into the philanthropical haven of hospital and asylum, and the veil is drawn over the disquieting scene. How can such a scheme of things be called good? Does the Ruler of the universe allow millions to suffer and to perish in order that His garners may be stored with grain?

'Must Thy harvest-fields
Be dunged with rotten death?'*

Is no other course open to the All-Wise and All-Powerful?

Generation after generation of humanity have asked this same question, and no complete answer has ever been forthcoming. The stricken have despaired, rebelled, endured, blasphemed, and prayed, but one and all are met by the eternal silence of that which must be: if the secret is disclosed to them as they

* F. Thompson: 'The Hound of Heaven.'

cross the Threshold their lips are sealed and they carry it with them. But yet in the midst of the mystery surrounding the problem of suffering, glimpses and fragments of a purpose have been revealed, in which at some point beyond human vision the answer must rest.

The gift of free-will to mankind, being a Self-limitation on the part of the Divine Being, is in its widest aspect transcendent proof of Deity. With the power of choice however comes the possibility of sin; and since transgression of the Divine Will, whether in the natural or moral sphere, must be attended by punishment,—the possibility also of pain. All suffering therefore being the result of a wilful abuse of human prerogatives is independent of the Divine Will. Man is primarily and directly responsible.

But by a wonderful adaptation of means to ends on the part of the Creator suffering fulfils a purpose other than penal. It is also progressive. Opposition, failure, heartaches, disappointments, remorse, are milestones of the journey; great men are those who have triumphed over great sufferings and great failings. The Aeschylean conception which recognised in misfortune the retribution of an outraged god, exacting to the third and fourth generation a remorseless penalty for some act of arrogance or impiety,* has already given

* i.e. The doctrine of ὕβρις, φθονός, and ἄτη, the foundation-stone of Hellenic literature and the decalogue of Hellenic religion.

way in Sophocles to the belief that suffering not only punishes, but also elevates, purifies, disciplines. It is a necessary step in regaining moral equilibrium and essential to progress. παθήματα μαθήματα. 'The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air: it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world.'†

And closely bound up with this progressive power of pain is the law of vicarious suffering. Pain need not imply personal sin. It may present another aspect of the divine attribute of self-abnegation, bringing with it the opportunity of lessening some portion of pain deserved by another; "we fill up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ." As in the homogeneity of the universe each part is knit together in one organism, so in the brotherhood of man each individual forms an integral fragment of the mosaic of humanity, embracing the past, present and future. Pain therefore can never be isolated, only corporate. This law of vicarious suffering by which one is permitted to a certain extent to bear the consequences of another's guilt, although the effect of sin must ultimately react upon the guilty party, is an extension of the principle of self-surrender. As selfishness is the extreme antithesis of progress, so pain willingly endured on behalf of a brother shews that spirit of supreme unselfishness which is

† Essay on Pain in 'Lux Mundi.'

the lifeblood of human existence. Voluntary self-sacrifice is a beautiful flower of moral goodness, but the cheerful acceptance of an unmerited, inevitable, load of suffering is still more beautiful even as it is more difficult. If perfect love is sacrifice, the greater sacrifice is the greater love.

Human conception of pain is inevitably misleading, for we cannot perceive the moulding of character which it accomplishes; if it is the ante-chamber to unending happiness in the world to come, then it is robbed of terror. We must accept the facts of life as they are. The world's sin entails the world's suffering, and that suffering is largely vicarious; yet it may be used as a stepping stone to something higher. We travail in order that we may gain Life Eternal, and the shadow that is cast upon life is the shadow of a Cross. Over Calvary pain and suffering brood in unmitigated gloom, but in the dawning light of the Resurrection there is no pain:—for sorrow and sighing have fled away.

CHAPTER IV

DEATH AND BEYOND

A consideration of death as an aspect of suffering, consequent on sin,—together with some indications of an after-life.

The teleology of nature and that increasing ascendancy of the spiritual element which we have already had occasion to notice,* reveal something of the mystery that surrounds decay and death, foreshadowing, however uncertainly, the conditions of a higher existence. Matter, we are informed by scientists, is imperishable. It may be decomposed into its constituent gases; the substantial mass to which the name matter is commonly applied may evanesce into thin air; the forces which impart solidity may be dispersed; but the primary essence is undestroyed and indestructible. There is a change of form. The constituent parts may never again be recomposed in identical proportion and degree, or under identical circumstances; but the fundamental, material substance,—whether it be a congeries of forces, electrons, molecules, particles or corpuscles—is reformed, modified, recollected, under another formal presentation.

* Chapter II.

We are so accustomed to the form of objects that when that form collapses, and the component elements are no longer perceptible to the senses, we are apt to assume that the end or death of that particular object has occurred. It is an end of that particular presentation of matter, but the essence remains; that which seems to be annihilation is only a sign that another change has taken place in the incessant flux of life. And if we are right in believing that material bodies and organisms are for a spiritual purpose, a constant change of form is presupposed by the multiplicity of spiritual activities. An unlimited power of adaptability is essential in the medium of expression.

In this indestructibility of matter and vitality of spirit are contained the elements of immortality. The simplest aspect of death is that of transition. The world is a school of discipline and education by which mankind is prepared for a higher plane of life. The soul absorbs from the world of things impressions and influences to stimulate its growth: it is humbled by failure, purified by trial, strengthened by experience; its faculties are sharpened, its activities extended. But sooner or later the time must come when the period of probation is at an end. The personality has fitted itself for a larger sphere of work. It can no longer derive benefit from the restrictions of a physical environment, and it is removed

—in the opinion of those who cannot see the secret processes in operation,—often prematurely. Death then is this passage from the conditions of earth to a fuller life: 'who knoweth if to live be truly death, and death be reckoned life by those below?'* The termination of the one mode of existence is the beginning of the other, and that other necessitates transformation. The body, caught up and modified by an intensity of spiritual perfection, is transformed into an infinitely plastic vehicle of expression. The outward frame now fully reflects the inward life. The familiar form is still there but transfigured by the beauty of the soul. The features, which were loved on earth, are now moulded and dominated by the essence of being. It is a living embodiment of personality engraven on a spiritual form and radiating the dazzling glory of perfect love and absolute purity: 'spirituale corpus intelligitur quod ita spiritui subditum est ut coelesti habitationi conveniat.'* This is the beautiful aspect of death: a life-work finished, the threshold of a wider sphere of activity passed, reunion with those who have gone before fulfilled.

But death implies something more than entrance to another condition of being: its grim reality is more profound than that of any change. Death is not only the bar of

* Euripides: Polyid: Fragm. vii.
* Augustine: de Fid. et Symb. xiii.

human ambition, the gate of the unknown, —but a thing of dread, a dark spectre, horrible and revolting. Coming an unbidden, unwelcome guest, from time to time it mysteriously summons one or other of the banqueters to be seen no more. It approaches noiselessly, unexpectedly, chilling the sunny garden with its icy breath. Attempts are made to combat fear by hiding unpleasing facts under a pretence of make-believe, to allay uneasiness by comforting theories of the natural termination of life, of the cessation of pain and anxiety, of the happiness of eternal rest. And yet in the presence of death these give little solace; before those stiffened limbs and sunken, bloodless features the jest falters unuttered on the lip. And no one can escape, no one is overlooked. That invitation is as universal as it is compelling:

'Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.'

At some time or other every soul stands alone face to face with death. The self and death—these become ultimately the only two realities of life. Whatever the attractions of a physical existence may be, however great the number of friends or interests, these are snatched away like so many toys and at the last only two things matter: 'I am a personal being' and 'I must die.' The awe which it inspires is not without reason. Death is terrible, because unnatural. It is a movement

in opposition to the universal coherence of matter and spirit, involving the bursting apart of soul and body. It is not merely the decomposition of fleshly substances, but the dissolution of the primary elements of being.

We have then two phenomena of an exceptional nature:—the disregard of spiritual claims on the part of man, and the partial separation of material and spiritual elements involved in death. And it would seem that these two phenomena, sin and death, unique in kind, are ultimately cause and effect. The misuse of freewill, introducing the presence of sin, introduces also the natural consequent of sin—death; 'by man came death.' The peculiar power and fear of death is due to man's subversion of the relations of soul and body; 'the sting of death is sin.' The inevitable outcome of a life in which illicit and excessive indulgence of the body is practised is death; 'to be carnally minded is death': 'if ye live after the flesh ye shall die': and again, 'he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' For a unique and unparalleled transgression of God's Will a unique and unparalleled penalty is exacted. The passage from this stage of existence to the next might have been accomplished by a gradual expansion of spiritual power and a corresponding conformity of body. Such a transformation would have been more in accordance with the normal processes of

nature, but it is only conceivable in the case of perfect man. Sinstained humanity has introduced a flaw which threatens to wreck the machinery. Consequently any transference to a higher state must be achieved by a temporary separation : the body is so soiled with sin that it must be unmade before it is fit to be reunited with a transcendent spirituality.

In the parting of soul from body lies the symbol of that death in which the soul is parted from God for ever. Death has this additional dread that it may be the consummation of man's alienation from his Maker, the final sundering of the bond between God and the human soul. It was this thought surely that caused Christ's tears. In a life full of disappointment and sorrow the only occasions on which it is recorded that He wept were at the impending doom of Jerusalem, and over the dead body of Lazarus. The one was an example of spiritual ruin, of which the other stood as a symbol or type. The dazzling splendour of the Holy City and the tomb in the quiet garden of Bethany both proclaimed the unutterable sadness of lost opportunity and the terrible consequences involved.* And the danger of an absolute and irrevocable separation from God was conveyed by Christ in language of the utmost gravity. There was a state, He taught, worse than the loss of existence itself. A human being who throbbed

* No reference is intended to the *person* of Lazarus.

with divine life might become an incarnation of the powers of evil; 'good were it for that man if he had not been born.'

And the reason why sin brings with it this danger of final exclusion is not hard to see. If the soul is denied the strengthening qualities of self-repression and communion during its earth life, it becomes diseased. Death may then mean one of two things. The body dissolves into its constituent parts. The soul remains shrunk and shrivelled; it is useless, dead, no longer a soul, the principle of life. There are here no elements of immortality. There can be no reunion, no purification. The soul is putrid throughout; its purging entails its annihilation. The Thing is soulless: the disrupture is final: it is the cessation of individual existence. The very conditions of a higher kingdom have been repudiated. There can be no continuity, for the golden chain which binds this world to the world beyond has snapped.

Or there is another possibility. The spirit, which has dishonoured the body throughout earthly life, may endure the agony of a mutilated existence in which the unnatural disembodiment effected by death is lengthened out into an eternity of self-inflicted punishment. And the retention of the powers of memory, undimmed by the coarsening influence of the senses, would be an intensification of the punishment. The effect of a single deed

stretches beyond the range of vision; what then must be the power of thought? A deed once committed, a thought once projected into reality, go through eternity gathering strength and volume. What then will be the effect upon the author confronted in another world by the multitude and immensity of his monstrous creations? He will there have no narcotic to dull the vivid recollections of a pitiless memory, or the bitterness of a hopeless remorse. The recognition of realities will then come too late, as

'with a shudder he feels his naked soul
In the great black world face to face with God.'*

Some such thoughts as these, as to the significance of death and the possibilities of a future state, seem to be suggested by earthly laws and principles. But we have a historic instance of survival after the apparent termination of life in the light of which we can correct them.

In the appearances of Christ after the Crucifixion we are allowed to catch a glimpse of an intermediate stage in which the Body, already transcending the conditions of earth life, has not yet entered the world beyond. It must be remembered, however, that in considering the Resurrection of Christ we are dealing with an event *sui generis* to which no human translation can afford a parallel. For

* F. Myers: 'St. Paul.'

in the first place although Christ submitted to the separation of Soul and Body, yet that Body had no need of decomposition in order to purify and adapt it to another sphere of existence; being uncontaminated by sin it was already perfect. And further, the peculiar circumstances of His appearances were in fulfilment of a special purpose, which from its nature and manner of completion could not recur again.

As a historical fact there is no legitimate reason for rejecting the narratives of the Resurrection except their supposed intrinsic improbability, which recent scientific and psychic research has done much to remove. Enough has already been said of the connection between the seen and the unseen worlds to make it clear that such a phenomenon is not necessarily destructive of natural law.* The fact of the empty tomb is as well attested as any fact of history requires. All conjectural explanations of the disappearance of the Body lead to an impasse. It cannot be supposed to have been a deception practised by the disciples; their surprise at its removal is obviously genuine, and the whole power of the new religion depended not upon abstract facts but upon a living Personality. There was no adequate motive to induce any partisan to incur an almost certain risk of detection by transferring the remains of his Master from

*pp. 58, 59.

the sepulchre in which they already lay. Even supposing that such a motive could be found how did this imaginary disciple succeed in evading the guard? and would not the disposal of the body of a teacher as well known as Christ present problems of insurmountable difficulty? It was the very last thing that the Jews or Romans would have wished. The swoon theory has been abandoned as indefensible.

And further, no hypothesis of hallucination or auto-suggestion agree with the facts recorded. That there was no general expectation of a Resurrection, and that Christ's prophetic words were misunderstood, seems plain. Mary Magdalene, though seeing the empty tomb, at once concludes that the gardener or somebody else has removed the Body. The reports of those who had paid an early visit to the sepulchre are received with incredulity. The disciples walking to Emmaus speak regretfully of disappointed hopes. There was certainly no general expectation of such an event, and the conditions under which the appearances were made were not conducive to delusion. At every time of the day, at early dawn, in the late afternoon, in the evening; in private and in public; in the presence of two, seven, ten, eleven, and about five hundred persons, as well as to the individual; in the ordinary round of duty as well as at an hour of rest; to men as well as

to women; to varying kinds of temperament, —Christ shewed Himself. And if these manifestations were the product of hysteria, what cause was there for their sudden cessation? Due regard must also be paid to the unconquerable conviction of the early Church; the calm deliberate, human accounts of the Gospels: their slight but natural variations: the absence of all fanaticism or religious mania: the reasonableness of the story which is unfolded, demanding only an acknowledgment of the finiteness of human intellect and the infinity of reality. In testing a fact of such vital importance as this the value of a temperate criticism cannot be overestimated. But while the *onus refutandi* rests with those who challenge the historical fact, it must be admitted that their arguments have not proved convincing. The Resurrection still remains 'the Rock from which all the hammers of criticism have never chipped a single fragment.*

As to the nature of these appearances, the most prominent characteristic running like a thread through the various scenes is the conjunction of the normal with the abnormal. The link which binds the material to the spiritual in every phase of life is unconsciously preserved by the evangelists. To begin with, the Resurrection itself, an event of supreme

* Archbishop of Armagh. Quoted by Orr in 'The Great Question,' p. 24.

spiritual importance, is attended by physical phenomena—an earthquake and the rolling aside of the stone from the Sepulchre. These portents were accompanied by an advent of angelic beings, although reports differed as to their number.

The Person of Christ was still much the same as before, and there was marked contact with the physical world. He spoke, and the inflections of His voice were recognised by Mary as those of the Master. There was a physical resemblance which could be recognised. His body was tangible. He was held by the feet:[a] Thomas, who had demanded to see the prints of the nails and to thrust his hand into His side, is overwhelmed by the truth:[b] His hands and His side were employed as a means of identification:[c] He breathed upon them:[d] The fullest passage in reference to these physical properties is Christ's own declaration: 'See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having.'[e] At Emmaus He acted in no way that excited attention, going in, sitting at meat, taking bread and breaking it as in former days. Not only did He make use of fire, coals, fish, and bread, in the neighbourhood of Galilee to prepare an early morning meal, but Himself partook of broiled

(a) Mat. 28^{9}.
(b) John 23^{25}.
(c) John 20^{20}.
(d) John 20^{22}.
(e) Luke 24^{39}.

fish and honeycomb with His disciples. He expounded the Scriptures,[g] remembered words previously spoken,[h] is full of human sympathy and of recollection.[i] His presence was plainly not overpowering and admitted of doubt:[j] but His former power is still shewn in the wonderful haul of fishes on the shore of Galilee, and in His penetrating insight into the human heart.

And yet there was a change. There was something frightening, an unearthly dignity, in the risen Master. The terror of those who saw and heard is mentioned as well as their joy. And this is reflected in His manner of salutation: 'Peace, fear not.' His visual aspect too had changed in some mysterious way. He was not recognised immediately by Mary. He appeared 'in another form'[k] to the two going to Emmaus, who thought that He was a stranger. It was some time before He was recognised on the shores of the Lake. And this transformation seems to be alluded to when He gently refuses Mary's embrace with the words, 'Touch Me not,'[m] and perhaps in that passage to which we have already had occasion to refer,[e] where there is a marked omission of reference to blood, the vital principle of mortal humanity. Unknown powers of locomotion are available. In spite of the exceptional precautions of seal

(g) Luke 24^{27}.
(h) Luke 24^{44}.
(i) John 21^{15} foll.
(j) Mat. 28^{17}.
(k) Mark 16^{12}.
(m) John 20^{17}.

and guard the Body of Christ rises leaving the cerements in their respective places. He appears when the doors are shut: He vanishes suddenly:[a] silently He stands upon the shores of Galilee. He comes and goes mysteriously, recalling His own words 'The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and ye cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.'

The Resurrection Body, though still the same as before, has undergone a subtle change; its attributes and properties have widened; its substance has become etherialised: it seems to be neither material absolutely nor spiritual absolutely, but some combination of both unknown *in rerum natura*. Even in life the spirit moulds and transforms the body, how much more then after death. 'In our earthly life,' writes Bishop Westcott, 'the Spirit is manifested through the body: in the life of the Risen Christ the Body is manifested (may we not say so?) through the Spirit.' And spiritual perception is still necessary in order to recognise the familiar Figure. His presence seems to depend upon the attitude of the individual. The earthly Master as well as the unearthly Christ was revealed, but only to the eye of faith. The laws which govern spiritual phenomena are still in operation: revelations are granted not to sceptics but to those who had known and loved Him

(a) Luke 24^{31}.

upon earth. That unbelief which was allowed to behold Him was an unbelief that dared not risk disappointment: the doubt which was removed was the doubt of intellectual difficulty, not of wilful obstinacy.

And so we learn that the same principles that are at work on earth obtain in the life beyond, though endowed with new powers and a wider sphere of activity. Vague generalities as to the survival of personality are inadequate. It is a grave mistake to suppose that there is no point of contact between this world and the next, that the use of the body or the health of the soul in an earthly existence are matters of indifference. The belief that the laws of the universe find their supreme culmination in a future state alone provides a rational solution of the complex phenomena of life. The disrupture of soul and body is but the temporary result of human weakness: their reunion is eternal, for the soul can only attain fulness of life in conjunction with a spiritual body. The abyss which separates this state from the next, though widened by sin, is still spanned by former ties. Nothing is wasted. Old material is reformed: the words and habits and practices of everyday life are the only points of continuity with the future. There will not be an annihilation of the past, only a remodelling. If the material is bad, the final structure will be insecure. An eternal connection exists between the seen and

the unseen, the divine and the human, heaven and earth, this life and the life hereafter; and the instruments of the one have their place and usefulness in the other. Mortal bodies contain within them the germ of immortality. Something of the present is carried into the future. The sounds and aspirations of to-day echo in the glad voices of to-morrow. Death is not the prelude to an utterly new mode of existence, but the continuation and consummation of the old.

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD WAITING FOR CHRIST

In our search for a solid basis of belief among the winding ways of the world we have seen that it is unsatisfactory and unreasonable to exclude a spiritual element from life. We have observed, moreover, that between this spiritual element and the world of things there exists a subtle and unceasing relationship which has as its foundation the subservience of the physical: that any perversion of this relationship, in so far as it throws the physical into undue prominence, entails an act of resistance against the Supreme Will, and brings with it suffering and death. A further consideration of this mysterious conjunction has afforded glimpses of the possibilities and conditions of an after-existence, which have been found not inconsistent with those narratives containing the great instance of survival after death. A review of the gradual development and evolution of man's spiritual instinct in the ancient world will suffice to bring this section to a close.

If a belief in God is accepted as consistent with reason and experience, it is intelligible

that He would wish to reveal to the world His Nature and requirements. And we should expect that in the weary struggle of humanity, from childhood to maturity, the truth would be imparted by a series of patient disclosures rather than by one blinding flash of illumination. Further, it is reasonable to suppose that communication would be made by every channel of being and not through any single set of specialised faculties. A true conception of God is not intellectual only, or intuitive only. The one may engender a logical belief in the existence of a supreme spiritual Being, as in Plato, but its conclusions are ill-balanced without the testimony of the other. It is by both these channels that revelations seem to come: through the superhuman guidance of the brain to the recognition of truths, which in their nature transcend pure reason, and through direct communion with the souls of men in that mysterious intercourse which lies at the root of human life. The essential meaning of revelation implies the condescension of Divine Omniscience to human ignorance, imparting a knowledge of the unseen world which could not have been attained by unaided human effort. This process entails no interference with the regularity of nature for an abnormal purpose; it is a normal phenomenon in the development of life in accordance with the Divine Will. In its widest aspect it embodies the relationship of the human with

the Divine, comprising the revelations of God on the one hand, and the response of man on the other.

The characteristic form in which man's response has always found expression is that of worship. Religion is an irresistible instinct of human nature, whose universality and trustworthiness is attested by the multifarious creeds and practices which have prevailed in every period of history. From the earliest ages man has realised the presence of a Spiritual Being and longed to draw into closer communion. As was natural early endeavours to worship were childish, based upon what now seems like ignorance or misunderstanding; spiritual vision was so dim with the sleep which preceded creation that the divine image appeared blurred: yet man had started upon the path of knowledge and of life. Even in the crude absurdities of pagan myth and cult there is something impressive in the gropings of the ancient world 'searching after God if haply they might find Him.' The perception of the divine in nature, the worship of an Odin, the reverence of a fetish presupposing intelligence in matter, the idolatry of the savage, the self-mutilations of the devotee, the practice of sacrifice acknowledging in the symbol of a common meal the bond which exists between mankind and his Maker, the rites of ancestor-worship and honours paid to the dead—were all rudimentary and experi-

mental stages in the world's religious education. Such conceptions, though primitive, contained the germ of a tremendous reality. And effort was rewarded by an increase of revelation. With an infinite patience man was led from a faltering articulation to a clearer enunciation of spiritual truths. Simultaneously with physical development the divine nature forced its way outward. With the growth of intellect and moral sensibility came a nobler conception of Deity. And as spiritual capacities widened God revealed at different times and in different places in an increasing degree the wonders of His Nature.

It is sometimes felt to be a difficulty that many characteristics supposed to be the peculiar result of inspiration or of Christianity can be traced to pagan or pre-Christian influences. For example, it is generally acknowledged that the Biblical account of creation was probably evolved from the extravagant cosmogony of Babylonia. The possession of a decalogue, at one time thought to be the special privilege of the chosen people, can be paralleled in the sacred books of other religions.* Certain Christian doctrines were first suggested many years before the coming of Christ: Greek philosophy foreshadowed the doctrine of Divine Immanence: the ἥρως of Hellas contained the conception of a man-god: the legends of Dionysus,

* e.g. Buddhism.

though coarse and bizarre in detail, adumbrated the Sacrifice of the Messiah. To the founders of nearly every religion, besides that of Christianity, supernatural attributes have been ascribed after death. A Christian spirit is reflected in many of the writings of Seneca. Similarities have been traced between the Ethics of Aristotle and the Sermon on the Mount. The characteristically Christian maxim of forgiveness is found in the teachings of Confucius, though regarded as difficult in practice: the same precept is praised by Budda, and declared by Hillel to comprise the whole law.

But if it is true that the spiritual instinct, of which religion is the outward expression, follows a course of development as pronounced as that of physical organisms, such coincidences are natural. Because truth is changeless we expect to see anticipatory gleams of the supreme revelation in the pagan world. And this is the case. The shadow of Christ is cast along the pages of the past: there is a dim perception of the great events which were to happen. Premonitions of the truth are the rational antecedent of a full revelation, and Christianity, far from being an eclectic system of pagan cults, is the normal consummation of previous tendencies.

With the growth of revelation we can observe an increasing knowledge and practice of virtue: in particular of the virtue of un-

selfishness, which has already been mentioned as the peculiar sign of a wholesome moral condition.* In primitive times when the instinct of self-preservation predominated man lived in a state of enmity with his neighbour; the tie of kin alone was respected. But the impulse of evolution demanded unselfishness; the aggressiveness of the savage had to give way. Man is fundamentally creative, and cynical assertions that the ultimate motive of action is self is only true of a crude or decadent civilisation. By degrees the bond of family extended to tribal relationships: tribal relationships in turn became the basis of national co-operation: racial prejudice replaced animosities of clan, and patriotism became the special form of unselfishness. This sense of national pride sometimes widened to embrace even a larger society. Socrates called himself 'a citizen of the world.' Alexander the Great cherished dreams of a world-wide empire. Stoicism recognised the dignity of human nature and insisted on the duty of helping others. Cicero speaks of 'the universal society of the human race'; Virgil, inspired by a similar idea, foretells a golden era of peace for mankind. But such dreams of a universal brotherhood only occurred in a few cases: the dependence of man on man in the ancient world was for the most part restricted to the bounds of country.

*p. 52.

But there was a people who possessed in a unique degree affinity with the unseen, whose inherent spiritual genius dominated and inspired every phase of political, social and religious life. In no nation of pre-Christian times was the course of revelation more clearly marked than among the Hebrews. In spite of dark periods of disobedience and apostasy the loftiest ideals of God and of conduct were maintained in the face of bitterest opposition. Their character had been moulded in the solitude of desert-wanderings, purified by failure, disciplined by punishment, hardened in warfare, refined by exile; and the course of their religious history was in the main one of triumphal progress. The chords which had been struck for ages on the harp of life found sympathetic echo in their souls: in the turmoil of earth peace had been secured, contact with the Divine Being preserved, the power of spiritual vision treasured. To them the clouds of glory, which man trails on entering the world, seemed no fanciful embroideries to adorn the sordid apparel of humanity, but an integral part of humanity itself.

The outstanding feature of this religious development was the phenomenon of prophecy, at once the peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew nation and the highwater-mark of revelation in the ancient world. The prophets embodied the spiritual disposition of the people: they were instruments for the awaken-

ing both of their fellow-countrymen and of mankind. They stand like beacons illuminating the darkness of uncertainty with the light of unclouded knowledge. Under their keen vision the things of sense fall into true proportion: their eyes are untroubled by inaccuracy of perspective. Their words are permeated by a divine teleology, infusing into the earthly framework a spiritual significance which passing the bounds of this world raises the human element to the loftiest range of inspiration. As they speak, the seen reveals the unseen, the temporal is merged in the eternal. In their presence the nearness of another world to the most prosaic of human relations appears with unmistakable clearness; while their feet tread the path of the present their faces are turned to the future. The interests of the day, the peoples and tendencies, are to them shadows of spiritual realities, illustrating the eternal principles of right and wrong, and pointing to the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Israel, Jerusalem, Priest, Sacrifice, Prophet, King, the Law, the Temple, Freedom and Captivity, all become symbols and types of the distant future. In the same way hundreds of years later the prophetic utterance of the Messiah, concerning the impending doom of the Holy City, bursts its earthly bonds and developes into a magnificent forecast of the end of the world and of the foundation of New Jerusalem.

It is not easy to over-emphasize the importance of the testimony which Hebrew history bears to the reality of a Divine guidance and the power of revelation, summoned into full operation by innate receptiveness and obedience. There is something inevitable and irresistible in this slow onward movement. Mistakes were made; the nation became discontented, idolatrous, apostate; but this was due to imperfect practice, not to any failure of religious equipment. Where the guidance of prophet and priest was followed there was nothing to unlearn: where the people were true to prophetic counsels there was an unswerving advance to a distant goal. In the light of this inspired knowledge that which had been perceived only dimly by contemporary nations was recognised unhesitatingly by the Jews; the unity of God was understood when neighbouring peoples were lost in polytheism; the God of Israel required justice, mercy, and purity, when other deities encouraged licence; when Persian or Greek mythology was embedded in a crust of immorality, Hebrew theology preserved a purity that was unique. In the light of this unchanging knowledge the books of the Old Testament, written in different countries and under different conditions, in spite of varying authors, editors, and dates,* reiterate the same fundamental truths: each contributes its portion to the

* Roughly from 1000 B.C. to 400 B.C.

gradual unfolding of the destiny of the nation. In the light of this prophetic knowledge the complex sacrificial system of the Jews with its precise regulations as to material, occasion, and ceremonial—apparently a piece of ungainly machinery without intelligible purpose or cause—becomes a fragment of the vast design fulfilled in the purpose of the Messiah; the gifts which had been made to God for centuries culminate in the gift of Self; the instinctive feeling that the Covenant must be renewed from time to time because of human guilt leads at length to the realisation of the inefficacy of all human sacrifice; the purpose of sin-offering, burnt-offering and peace offering, for so long imperfectly understood yet obediently performed, is perfectly accomplished by Christ, Who unites in His One Person the virtues of Sacrificer, Victim and Priest.

The religious development of the Hebrew nation was not only a remarkable witness to the power of revelation but an essential factor in the spiritual training of mankind. If that work had been left undone the world would have been unprepared, humanly speaking, for the Incarnation. It was the special privilege of the Jews to educate man for the supreme revelation of God in the Person of Christ: and it was a privilege not due to Divine favouritism but earned by intrinsic merit. That revelation was a culmination of the past and

the beginning of the future. On that Rock broke the waves of the ancient and modern world alike. It was indeed sad that at the hour of victory, when after centuries of preparation the nation had given to the world a Saviour, it was not under the leadership but upon the mangled body of Judaism that Christianity arose; that the very people, who had waited with such longing for the Messiah, crucified Him when He came.

We can trace then an evolution of the spiritual instinct of man as marked as that of the physical frame. A steady stream of revelation flowed into the ancient world by two main channels,—the narrower channel of reason, and the broader channel of spiritual communion. And two divergent conclusions were accordingly formed. Philosophy on the one hand, observing an Intelligence operating in the universe, conceived an Intelligence immanent in nature: Hebrew theology, on the other, formulated a transcendent doctrine of God. An apparent opposition divided Greek pantheism and Hebrew deism. Was it possible that these extreme lines of thought met? Were the doctrines of Transcendence and Immanence irreconcilable and mutually exclusive? Were the conclusions of intellect erroneous as well as incomplete, or could they be justified? Again, was religion only a circumscribed area of specialised thought, or did it embrace all truth for its kingdom? The

world was waiting for the answer, which was still to come.

In view of the patience displayed in the education of mankind up to this point and of the careful arrangement prevailing in the material order of things, we should expect that the ground of the culminating revelation would be prepared in order that the seed might not die through sterility of soil. And this supposition is justified. There are traces of a patient preparation at work centuries before the final consummation. First there was preparation of place. It was not a matter of chance that prior to the birth of Christ religious life centred to an unusual degree in Palestine. Girt by mountains, sea and desert, although in close proximity to a constant stream of civilisation from east to south-west, Palestine enjoyed quiet and seclusion. Jerusalem itself, situated on the summit of a hill and surrounded on three sides by ravines, was removed from the disintegration of luxury; the City had ample opportunity for the development of religious thought uninterrupted by disquieting influences. And yet in spite of its privacy the country was well placed, when the time came, for the diffusion of religious conceptions through every nation and language. It was in touch with three continents. The plain of Esdraelon, forming a highway between Asia and Africa, between the Nile and Euphrates, shook to the tramp

of the armies of the world. Aryan and Semitic races met in the Capital, and at the time of festivals sojourners journeyed from distant lands to the Holy City. The Jews moreover were dispersed over the known world,—northwards to the shores of the Black Sea, southwards through Arabia, eastwards as far as India, westwards among the isles of the Ægean, in the capitals of Rome and Alexandria,—and had taken with them their religious enthusiasm. Palestine was the pivot of the ancient world, and the centre of its spiritual gravity.

There was preparation then of place. There was preparation also of time. It was important that the right moment should be chosen for the planting of the seed in order that general conditions might favour its reception and growth. It was important that the supreme revelation should be withheld until contemporary thought was able to comprehend its significance; there must be receptivity of mind. And also of language. Some common vehicle of expression must be available for the interpretation as well as for the expression of the truth. And if distant nations were to have an opportunity of participating, it was important that there should be a ready means of transit from one place to another. Such a state of things had been assured previous to the Incarnation. An instrument of educational value was provided by Hellenic

art and thought, which had been introduced to the East as an immediate result of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The dispersion of the Jews had stimulated a general religious interest. The Greek language supplied a splendid medium for the interchange of ideas, while intercourse among the peoples of the then known world was facilitated by the formation of the Roman Empire.

And the time was ripe, not only in view of the favourableness of national circumstances, but also by reason of the world's moral condition. With all his great achievements man appeared for the moment helpless; he had entered upon a stage of hesitation. The morality of the pagan world prior to the coming of the Messiah was sickly; and this not by comparison with what was to come but in the light only of what had gone before. There seemed to be a point beyond which it was unable to rise; its aptitude was full of a promise that was unfulfilled. Philosophy had achieved signal results in its recognition of the bonds of society, of the value of individualism, of the claims of the state, of the brotherhood of man; but an idealism combined with intellectual appreciation of virtue was its utmost achievement; its creative work had no quickening vitality. There was no inclination to put precept into practice, and it was well said of Socrates that 'he never had a disciple who was willing to die for him.' Unselfishness

failed to pass the bounds of race. Self-interest was countenanced, encouraged, by philosophy, and the word 'barbarians' expresses something of the dislike felt towards foreigners and strange customs. The brotherhood of subordinate nations which existed under the rule of the Roman Empire brought with it an atmosphere of cosmopolitanism, but this was only superficial; it was a brotherhood of conquest. A few might be abler to grasp a nobler ideal of society, but there was no clear conception how that society might become universal, no suggestion as to where a link might be found to unite these heterogeneous elements. The general attitude of humanity was summed up in the proud boast of Sulla that no one had done more good to his friends or more mischief to his enemies.

It seemed as though the waters of revelation were stemmed by banks beyond which they could not flow; and the cause of this obstruction is not far to seek. Revelation is conditioned by man's spiritual sensitiveness, its depth proportionate to his spiritual receptivity. In the pagan world physical and intellectual faculties had outrun the spiritual; revelation was confined for the most part to intellect, and the truths disclosed by pure reasoning were fragmentary. In Greece during the fifth century B.C. this one-sided development was carried to such an extreme that the course of action prescribed by the brain was nobler than

that advocated by religion. Religious beliefs having lost touch with the current morality became stagnant and antiquated. Gods, who had been objects of worship for centuries, were tried before the bar of public opinion and condemned. Deities reverenced by Hesiod were rejected by Plato. A mythology, which produced in Aeschylus an intense religious fervour, presented to Euripides a fitting object of caricature. Because an ill-developed religious instinct submitted for acceptance beliefs that were inconsistent with the conclusions of a powerful intellect the gods were discredited, and the result was scepticism.

But it was found that reason was an insufficient inducement to right action. The highest ideals remained unpractical and unreal, and the virtues, appreciated by the brain, played little part in the lives of either philosophers or contemporaries. Political and social depravity derived additional zest from the lifeless abstractions of philosophy, and before long degenerate exponents of the philosophical systems themselves began to proclaim self-indulgence as the *summum bonum* of existence; the most brilliant thinkers of the ancient world were followed by heretics of the Cynic and Epicurean schools, under whose influence national aspirations and beliefs crumbled to dust. Recognising the helplessness of reason men were thrown upon their own resources. Self-sufficiency became the

creed, despair and pessimism the result. Intellectual self-reliance produced a mockery of morality and happiness. The hopelessness of speculation was expressed once for all by Seneca, when he said: 'against all the injuries of life, I have the refuge of death.' From the clouds of theory death was the one haven of refuge.* 'Philosophy culminated in suicide.'

A want was felt, which could not be defined. Something was missing, which human intellect could not replace. A general restlessness and a longing for the real solution of the enigmas of life was abroad. In what did the *summum bonum* of existence truly consist? What was the pearl without price? The attempts of hedonists to extract the maximum of pleasure had proved a failure. Pleasure was elusive: in the process of enticing it evaded the pursuer. He that loved his life found that all life had to give was worthless. Self-love ended in disillusionment. The philosophers of Greece had climbed the ladder of earthly knowledge to see blankness; the effort was abortive, visionary. The culture of Hellas, the law and order of the Roman Imperium—great achievements in themselves—were after all a hollow triumph; external prosperity and peace had been secured at the expense of internal corruption. A wave of moral degradation paralysed

* Noticeably among the Roman Stoics.

the spiritual energies of the world. The inauguration of a new constitutional régîme had played havoc with old associations and creeds. The debauchery of the pagan Empire, painted in lurid colours by Tacitus, was notorious. Brutalising spectacles, inhuman practices, an unbridled sensuality, were signs of the times: the moral tempers of the world were soured despite the sweetness of material circumstances. Intercourse with foreign countries had introduced multitudinous cults and superstitions. Scepticism was at its height ineffectively masquerading under the guise of religious affectation. The faith of Socrates, the idealism of Plato, end in the half-cynical, half-desperate cry of Pilate: 'What is Truth?' That question at once summed up the feverish speculation of philosophy and acknowledged its hopelessness.

It is a crucial stage in the history of the human race. Man is in peril of retrogressing; never before has the need of guidance been more urgently required. Pagan systems have proved ineffective. The Jewish nation even is powerless to aid and waits for the voice of prophecy to break the silence once again. There is a breathless hush of prophet, philosopher and priest: their work is for the moment done. The world is dissatisfied, unhappy, tired. It needs a help greater than itself can give: it looks for some light to reveal the onward path. It needs a Guide,

a Pioneer, a Friend, to whom it can turn. The darkness of uncertainty closes about it. Its hopes are sinking, its strength failing. The world is waiting for a Christ. Is it incredible that He came?

THE ANSWER

. . . 'But then face to face.'

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF CHRIST

Before considering the extent to which the Incarnation and Life of Christ accord with the foregoing principles and conditions, there are two questions of an introductory nature which we must face. And the first is:—How far are we justified in assuming that the records concerning Christ are authentic?

A vehement attack has been made in recent years against the legendary embellishments supposed to be contained in the Gospel narratives. Harnack, Rénan, von Soden, are among the foremost exponents of this school of thought. Endowed with great intellectual power and inspired by sincere admiration for the Person of Christ they insist on purging Christianity of those features which for want of a better term are called supernatural. In fact, thinking men though prepared to believe in God, whatever definition may be attached to the name, continue to worship science. It is argued that because God works through the medium of law any interference in the mechanism of the universe would imply the presence of an unwelcome contingency which

He had failed to foresee: that He should be compelled to reverse His system, in order to regain a perverse humanity, is inconceivable. If a phenomenon therefore cannot be explained or established it is rejected; the Creator is dethroned in favour of His creation and shackled with the chains which He Himself forged. The doctrine of the Incarnation is declared to be a weakening superstition, and Christ's Life reduced to nothing more than a splendid example of noble humanity. The biography of the world's greatest Teacher and Benefactor, it is contended, was naturally surrounded by a halo of romance. The Gospels are treated as unhistorical, a mixture of fact and fable. The Virgin Birth, the appearances after the Resurrection, in fact the greater part of the miraculous element are relegated to the realm of legend as the natural accretions which have crystallized about the record of a magnetic Personality.

The question at issue is deeper than one of merely literary interest. If the accounts of Christ's Life are nothing more than the coloured accounts of a famous teacher and prophet, His claim to be Son of God was figurative. But in any just estimate of the historical value of the Gospels it is essential that presuppositions as to the possibilities of the unseen world should be laid aside. It is impossible to see the position which each piece of evidence holds in the chain of prob-

ability if it is previously subjected to the distortion of prejudice or of some possibly over-accentuated preconception. That the whole matter cannot be dismissed lightly is clear. 'There can be no shadow of reason for presuming that God, of Whose Nature we are absolutely ignorant, cannot become man, of whose essential nature we know hardly more.'* If a belief in an Incarnation of Deity is inconsistent with reason and experience, if the narratives of the Gospels are superstitious legends retarding progress, it may be questioned whether they can be a revelation from the Creator. If however the doctrines of Christianity are found to be 'agreeable to reason,' they may be accepted, not in a spirit of hasty credulity or unquestioning conservatism, but after sober deliberation. And decision must be determined for the most part by the general impression of sincerity and accuracy conveyed by the writers, and by the reasonableness of what they record. Certain considerations relating to these points are kept in view during the course of this and the following chapters.

In so far as the strength of Christianity is not derived primarily from historical records or miraculous events, the Gospels explaining Who Christ was, His Life and Mission, are of secondary importance; but their testimony cannot be ignored, and recent investigation has

* Illingworth: 'Divine Immanence.'

done much to establish their authenticity. Certain details affecting date of ultimate compilation, correct readings, also authorship, have required readjustment, but no signs of imposture or wiful misrepresentation of fact have been detected. To admit the possibility of human errors,—slips of memory, interpolations and the like,—is not to deny the inspiration of the narratives; if they present for the most part a life-like portrait it is not essential that they should be infallible. As to how far the supernatural element may be due to the imagination of a subsequent age it will be enough for the moment to remember this. If the policy of rejecting all unusual occurrences, of which the data could not be established with absolute certainty, were successful in practice, it would deserve attention: but when it leads to difficulties more perplexing than the original problem it is probably unsound. Ingenious explanations of the abnormal in the Life of Christ make havoc of the narratives which they profess to make plain. The view that the Gospels are a fantastic elaboration woven about the career of a character of unusual magnetism necessitates a complete reconstruction and reinterpretation of the story as told in the original. And the only justification of such drastic measures is the *a priori* assumption that what has not happened before can never happen,—in itself unwarranted.

The rationalizing school of critics is based upon the initial error of supposing that an Incarnation of Deity is inconceivable. But this fundamental truth of Christian doctrine illustrates, interprets, and fulfills that principle of material and spiritual interpenetration which has formed the basis of the foregoing chapters. The union of matter with spirit, of the human with the divine, was transformed by the Birth of Christ from a rational conclusion to a living reality. Man is essentially a part of God, not by a depreciation of the Divine but by an elevation of the human. Heaven is not a supra-celestial abstraction but a Force immanent on earth. In the light of the Incarnation previous revelations in science, history, religion and experience, are seen to be true to the same eternal principles; the discords in the workings of nature and in the moral government of the world are at last resolved.

And the second point that demands attention is this. The very fact which we would establish as vital to our argument—Divinity coexistent with humanity in the Person of Christ—itself leads to a difficulty, that of reconciling the Divine Nature with an earthly existence.* If Divinity operated on earth, of what use can that Life be to man as an example, lived under exceptional conditions? On the other hand if Divinity played no part

*On the subject of the Kenosis see a critical examination of the Greek text of Phil. 2, 5-8, by Gifford: 'Incarnation.'

in His earth life, in what respects did Christ differ from an ordinary mortal? This appears to be a dilemma in which either Christ's efficacy as an Example and Redeemer must be surrendered or an admission made which approximates to a denial of the Divine Nature. But consideration shews that the root of the difficulty lies in the impossibility of defining in finite language a truth whose nature is infinite. Words and phrases are mechanical devices for the transmission of thought, whose function is to express not to compress. Precise formularisations may indicate the line on which the solution rests but if pressed to an ultimate conclusion result in a denial of the subject investigated.

An answer is not to be found in the meaning of words, but rather in those principles which we can trace in the world around us. We have already seen that matter and spirit are inseparably joined together, that the soul is the central principle, of which the body is an essential accompaniment, and that both work in harmony for the Spirit of the universe. In every human being is implanted a shoot or germ of the divine, and it is inconceivable that man does not partake of the divine nature in some degree. But a divine nature absolute implies something radically different from the divine germ in human nature in that its scope and powers are unlimited. In undergoing the conditions

of an earthly existence Christ abandoned the use of the powers wielded by Omnipotence for the very reason that their magnitude of operation so transcended the narrow confines of sense that their full display in the world of objects would have seemed to contradict and confound the circumstances of humanity. There are gradations in the scale of material and spiritual harmony, which, though admitting of no exact line of demarcation, supply a real meaning to the human kingdom as distinguished from the spiritual. The transference of the conditions obtaining in the highest realms of the one to the physical system of the other would not only reverse that system but also transform its physical character. An earthly body can only endure a certain degree of spiritual tension without falling outside the region of the sensuous. Christ therefore voluntarily limited Himself by refusing temporarily the use of those forces which were incompatible with a perfect human body. In order that He might bring Himself within the restricted area of humanity and conform to human conditions He abandoned those powers which would have plunged the physical order, humanly speaking, into chaos.

But unlike mortal man Christ was in direct touch with endless spiritual agencies which by reason of His Divinity were still at His command. From the commencement of His Ministry the display of such agencies was

resolutely withheld, but there was no moment at which they could not have been called into operation. And this instead of alleviating must at times have intensified His burden of sorrow. The knowledge that it was possible to render His opponents speechless by a revelation of Majesty must have added a poignancy to His rejection. There was but a tiny barrier that separated the powers of God from those of man in the Person of Christ, and that barrier was voluntarily erected; the illimitable waves of Deity swelled and surged against the floodgates of Divine Self-limitation. Behind and beyond His earth life stretched the oceans of Divinity, the swellings of whose waters rolling onward from eternity found finite expression as they broke upon the shores of humanity. And further, although the restrictions of human nature were observed and its conditions unflinchingly fulfilled, the circumstances were not those of sin-contaminated man but of a perfect human life, of man as he was intended to be, not of man undermined and curtailed by moral disease.

We can thus admit the union of human nature with Divinity in the Person of Christ, and all that this implies, without in any way transgressing the principles of human existence. Even in imperfect lives something in essence unearthly obtrudes itself, whether called genius or inspiration. Deeds per-

formed or words spoken by us sometimes bear a divine impress; that is,—they are in their source and nature of a higher order than this world. We too trail clouds of glory. And so in Christ's Life we may be prepared for phenomena, unique and proportionately in advance of ordinary human achievements as His Nature was in advance of ordinary human nature, without destroying the efficacy of His human life or being compelled to reject such events on the ground of their manifest impossibility. After all, a remark of Charles Lamb during a conversation on great men strikes at the root of the matter: 'I will tell you what it is,' he said. 'If Shakespeare were to enter the room, we should all stand; but if Christ were to enter, we should all kneel.'*

With this much as introduction we shall be the better able to perceive the way in which the Birth and Life of Deity in the midst of an earthly environment harmonises with those circumstances of being, already contemplated. And in the light of these we may now proceed to consider the wonderful purpose of the Incarnation.

The condition of man was precarious.† The point had been reached at which intellectual and physical development was perilous in that it still further widened the breach

* Quoted by the Archbishop of York: 'The Opportunity of the Church of England.'

† pp. 107—112.

between the flesh and the spirit. In the midst of universal progress his was a state of hesitation: his nature had degenerated. He had neither knowledge nor determination to ensure recovery. A remedy was imperative. And since man had acted disobediently in rejecting the good he had created a barrier between himself and God,* relations were strained to breaking point: and he had no power to abridge the estrangement. The system of sacrifice shewed man's belief that this gulf was not impassable; that although the offering of a sinful heart was the highest gift which he could make, there lay in the future hope of a Sacrifice which by its completeness would restore his lost prerogatives.† And as a consequence of sin a mass of pain and suffering had accumulated which infected the whole being with its festering sores.‡ Vast powers latent in nature were yet undiscovered. Knowledge of God was still incomplete, nor was there certain assurance of the ultimate triumph of good over evil. No help was to be looked for from within. Progress from one kingdom to another could only be procured by the condescension of the higher to the lower: this was a vital condition of regeneration.

And then came One Whose Life proclaimed that He was from above, Who taught that

*p. 65.
†p. 103.
‡pp. 65 and foll.

entrance to a higher existence could only be gained through Him. As in a single nation may be concentrated the virtues of the past as an expression of all that is best in the present, so in a single individual the loftiest aspirations of mankind may be focussed and the converging lines of civilisation meet. And in Christ we see the recapitulation of humanity. In His Life were fulfilled the endeavours of the whole race and in His strength the weakness of mankind was removed. During His wanderings in the desert a sinless Man was confronted by that insidious temptation which is the cause of all human failure—the enchantment of worldly gain at the cost of spiritual loss,—and the victory of Christ not only repaired the mischief caused by previous recklessness but opened out possibilities of conquest for the future. The virtues of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, even to the point of laying down His life, and of absolute surrender of Will to that of the Father were found in Him.* The work of God was His absorbing passion on earth, the task which occupied Him in the Temple at the age of twelve, the thought which kept Him steadfast in the Garden of Gethsemane. Disobedience brought sin: obedience destroyed its power. That which man had failed to do Christ did. Man chose the carnal rather than the spiritual, prized the things of sense above

* cf. pp. 52 and 62.

the treasures of Heaven, turned his face from the light to the darkness, from the reddening glow of the dawn of humanity to the lurid shades of animal passion. But the obedience of Christ is manifest at the very crisis of His career. His return to Jerusalem on what He knew to be a fatal visit might have been cancelled: in the hour of His arrest that power which made the rabble reel might have been used to effect His own escape. But His hour was come; He suffered Himself to be arrested and crucified. And His submission to the process of Crucifixion itself was a prolonged act of obedience. Yet wonderful as would be the resolve to undergo this most cruel of deaths, it almost fades besides the more than human strength of purpose which through a life-time of suffering faced the appointed end with calm acquiescence in a Higher Will than that of man.

The result procured by this Life of unselfishness was the freedom of the human race. Through the pain of One Person by the mysterious law of vicarious suffering the world's bondage to sin was destroyed.* The pangs of a guilty humanity were borne by the only Man Who could support the load without staggering; soul and body were restored again to their true relation. And not only was the past absolved, but the triumph of the spirit was ensured for the future. Insight was

* cf. pp. 76, 77.

given into the powers which a sinless race might wield. Man was taught the real purpose of life, the sanctity of material things, the ascendancy of good over evil and of life over death. He saw what he might yet become and understood that the tribulations of the past were the prelude of a glorious future. A fresh start was made in the strength of Christ and in His Person man is eternally presented before God as regenerated. And yet we are not relieved of all the consequences of sin: death and suffering still remain. Nor is the Sacrifice of Christ efficacious for the individual without some act of self-identification. Intellectual assent is inadequate. The whole personality must acquiesce in His Sufferings before it can participate in the Risen Life. Man is still something more than a puppet: the sanctity of will is still regarded: as before, there is a possibility of failure.

The culminating purpose of the Incarnation was a full revelation of the Nature of God. Previous revelations had taught that He was All-Mighty, All-Wise, All-Just, All-Holy, All-Pure, but the fact of His surpassing Love had not yet been revealed. Could it have been brought home to man with a more compelling force than by the advent of the Son of God? By the light of this truth God was perceived to be no abstraction of Goodness or Power, but a Personal, Loving Being:

'The very God! think Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'"

The Incarnation was for a wonderful purpose and it is not surprising that it was brought to pass in a wonderful way. There is not space here to deal at any length with the difficulties which have surrounded the acceptance of the story of the Virgin Birth, but we must at least indicate the part which it fills in the general outline together with one or two reflections which may help to eradicate common misconceptions. The fact of a Virgin Birth has always challenged examination. It has been felt that an urgent cause as well as strong historical corroboration are necessary to account for so extraordinary an event. Let us briefly consider whether these conditions are satisfied.

The primary work of Christ, as we have already seen, was redemptive. The sickness of humanity demanded a Physician Who could not only diagnose but also remedy the malady. For this purpose One was to come

from above Who by submitting to the conditions of earth as Representative of man should prove victorious where man had failed, should obliterate the past, and by His constant strength and presence guarantee a state of health for the future. The primary condition of such a Saviour was sinlessness. It was of no avail to prescribe remedies when in one's own case those remedies had already proved useless; a sinless Saviour was essential. And this was procured by a virgin birth. As the taint of hereditary sin is transmitted from parents to child in the ordinary process of human generation, it is not unreasonable to believe that those laws being suspended normal tendencies would be checked, and that so the Son of God was enabled to enter the world in purity. Yet although the cause was urgent, it may be questioned whether the principles of the natural world could be harshly reversed even for so great a work. And here we must remember that the suspension of one law in favour of another has been conceded as natural;* and if ever a higher law superseded a lower we might expect it at the moment when Deity was assuming human flesh. The attitude of science is not one of condemnation. Professor Huxley says, 'It may be improbable, but we cannot say it is impossible.' Sir Oliver Lodge admits that it is not inconceivable from a scientific point of view, but fails

* pp. 58, 61.

to understand its necessity.* A parallel is provided by the varying methods of reproduction and generation which prevail in different kingdoms of nature, and although a birth without intervention is unique in the human scale it is not so elsewhere. Science rightly refuses to acknowledge a phenomenon of which there is no certain evidence, but it does not deny because it cannot disprove; moreover its knowledge is professedly limited to the physical, and in this case we are dealing with the spiritual in its highest manifestation.

The argument which seeks to discredit unusual phenomena on the analogy of pagan custom and mythology has already been discussed.† It has been urged that the claim of Christ to be Divine was only similar to claims made by other great men,—Alexander the Great, for instance, had announced that he was a son of Zeus;—that such belief moreover was encouraged by the thrill of expectancy which seems to have been abroad in the world at that time. But it is more natural to suppose that from the first a fundamental reality was perceived, dimly reflected in the pagan world and finally fulfilled by Christ: that the shadows of the future fell upon bygone days. Universal truths have found an echo at all periods, and throughout the course of evolution man seems to have been endowed

* 'Man and the Universe:' pp. 223, 224.
† pp. 97, 98.

with an anticipatory sense which jumped to conclusions unsupported by reason but justfied by events.‡

With regard to difficulties of a more technical character it is important to bear in mind that, humanly speaking, the facts of Christ's Birth could not have been made public until a considerable time after His death. General credence in so startling a story could only have been gained by incontrovertible evidence, and it is difficult to see how under any circumstances such evidence could have been forthcoming. Even if we suppose that this had been possible, the result would have been to paralyse human individuality contrary to Christ's method of procedure and use of power.* On the other hand, failure to satisfy popular incredulity would have resulted in vulgar discussion; the position of the Virgin Mother would have been rendered embarrassing, and the work of Christ would have been hindered at the outset. Owing to these considerations it was necessary that the truth should be withheld until many years afterwards.† All arguments therefore drawn from the apparent ignorance of contemporaries and immediate followers concerning the Virgin Birth fall to the ground. The closest

*p. 177.

† Sanday: 'Outlines of the Life of Christ,' pp. 197, 198. (note).

‡ 'Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis et exstitit maxime et apparet facillime.' Cic: Tusc: Disp. i. 14.

disciples, if they knew about it, maintained silence. The earliest record, that of St. Mark's Gospel, contains no mention of it, nor is it referred to in the sketch of Christ's life in the early chapters of Acts. St. Paul, who was probably martyred at Rome about 64 A.D., to whom the fact would have been a powerful argument in his case for the Divinity of Christ, nowhere mentions it.‡ The truth probably gained general currency for the first time about 70 A.D., when those immediately concerned would no longer be affected by its publication, appearing in St. Luke's narrative, written it is supposed about 70 A.D., and in St. Matthew's, slightly earlier.

Since the Virgin Birth is recorded as a fact by a historian whose impartiality there is no reason to doubt, and whose genuine historical faculty each fresh discovery tends to confirm,* the *onus refutandi* rests with the school of destructive critics. Two books, one by Professor Soltau and the other by Professor Lobstein, state the arguments on behalf of the legendary theory with conviction and ingenuity, but it cannot be said that the result is convincing. In the former there is a tendency, which may be noticed only too frequently elsewhere, to ignore the orthodox view

‡ With the exception of the doubtful reference Gal. 4^4.

* Topographical details, as given by St. Luke, have been confirmed by the investigations of Professor Ramsay on the coasts of Asia Minor. The accuracy of his chronology also has been verified, notably in connection with the census of Quirinus.

of the Church and to construct a case upon the weakness of an unorthodox interpretation. Both accentuate the silence of contemporaries, analogies drawn from heathen mythology, and the natural process by which romantic stories would accumulate. But the main contention is based upon the discrepancies which it is alleged exist between the version of St. Matthew and that of St. Luke. If we allow however for a different source of information and a different point of view, such discrepancies are not unnatural; and careful comparison will show that the two accounts are supplementary, the one supplying details absent in the other. In conclusion, it is significant that the fact of the Virgin Birth was never used by Christ as a proof of Divine Commission, nor was it so obtruded by those who shared the secret. The common tendency is to start from the wrong end of the chain, omitting intermediate and necessary links. With the challenge 'prove this, and we can believe all,' men proceed to impose on such mysteries a purpose which they were never intended to fulfil, and to extract evidence which from their nature they cannot convey. The truth of the Virgin Birth, revealed not at the commencement but a considerable time after the completion of Christ's Ministry, was never destined to act as a foundation stone of the Christian Church, but only to round off the symmetrical proportions of the whole structure.

CHAPTER VII

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

In Christ we would trace, if it were possible, that conjunction of Divinity with humanity which forms the centre as well as the end of life. If it is true that Christ is the culminating point of evolution, the answer to the paradoxes of dualism, He must be perfectly human as well as perfectly Divine. If He is to satisfy the conditions of Saviour and Guide demanded by man's moral state, if His work is to be effective and Christianity conclusive, He must be the supreme embodiment of that union which can be traced in every corner of the universe. In Him must harmonise the human and the Divine each in its widest expression, yet forming no inconsistent medley of characteristics but a perfectly balanced whole. His Nature must have its centre on earth as well as in Heaven: there must be an aloofness from, as well as a point of contact with, the world. And in collecting the facts which have reference to our purpose it will be necessary to examine in detail the accounts of the four Gospels, dismissing as far as possible preconceived ideas concerning supernatural

phenomena. We shall then be in a position to estimate how far the data supplied by these narratives agree with the laws and principles already outlined; whether the circumstances of Christ's Life are in accordance with the conclusions of science and psychology; and lastly to what extent the evidence incidentally afforded by this survey endorses the accuracy of the Gospel portraiture. And if we follow the example set by other branches of inquiry by distinguishing between the human and superhuman in that Life, it is not because any such distinction is absolute, but because an examination of isolated features facilitates results. We will consider therefore separately some human and Divine characteristics of Christ before proceeding to contemplate their conjunction in His Indivisible Personality.

HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS.

Although in possession of powers, which might seem to set Him in a place apart, Christ lived a human life with human experiences. As a Child He is laid in a manger, subjected to the rite of circumcision, and duly presented in the Temple according to Jewish custom. We are given little information of Boyhood, but the few details recorded—obedience to parents, visits to Jerusalem, eager interest in the questions of the day—denote a natural development of brain and physique. From the frequent references to the Old Testament

during the course of His Ministry we infer that from an early period Christ was devoted to the sacred literature of His country. As years pass He meets with the same fate that has attended many reformers: He is discredited: His public career, humanly speaking, is a failure. He is thrust out of His native town, rejected by the Samaritans, treated with indifference by Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, spurned by His countrymen, deserted even by professed adherents.

The portrait given is not that of a hermit, but of One in intimate touch with every phase of life. Far from displaying aversion to worldly sights and sounds He takes a keen delight in the whole world of nature. And this love of natural beauty is shown in the number of illustrations which He draws from scenery:—windswept reeds, lilies, birds, sunrise and sunset, budding trees, fields white at harvest-time. Homely incidents and similes also figure prominently in His teaching: we are told of the habits of dogs and swine, vultures hovering over some carcase, foundations suitable for building, the cheapness of sparrows, the endurance of wine-skins, the secret but effective action of leaven, the preserving power of salt, hairs of the head, children at play in the market-place, a sower, various soils for seed, the growth of tares and corn, the minuteness of a mustard seed, a plowman driving his furrow without glancing behind

him, a pearl-merchant, a net containing different kinds of fish, a shepherd calling sheep by name or seeking a wanderer, a wolf scattering sheep, methods of hiring labour, idlers in the public ways, a patch in an old garment, a woman with a candle searching for a lost piece of silver,—many of which may be reminiscent of early days at Nazareth. The history of His public life abounds in human pictures. We can call to mind the family gatherings at Bethany, the nocturnal visits of Nicodemus to that upper room, the Master wearied and thirsty at Jacob's well, the Mother and brethren endeavouring to get a word with the popular Teacher. Or again we see Him happy with His disciples among the groves of Gethsemane, and picture them journeying together, partaking of a common store, joining in an evening hymn. We can imagine Him in the busy crowds of Jerusalem watching the people as they cast money into the treasury, marking the self-conscious pose of the Pharisees in the Temple, noting the behaviour of guests at a wedding, speaking cheering words to beggars as they lay at the gates of the rich. Glimpses are given of social festivities, of hospitality accepted from Pharisee and publican. The Master's feet are bathed in the tears of a sinner. A disciple reclines on His breast at the Last Supper. We read of Him asleep, arising by night to go to a solitary place, teaching in synagogues, thronged by

rich and poor, sinking beneath the weight of the Cross. And not only does He love human things but recognises their use. He insists upon the observance of the Mosaic regulations concerning leprosy: acknowledges the authority of earthly sovereignty: acquiesces in the payment of tribute: is present at a marriage feast: attends services in the synagogues and feasts in Jerusalem. At His direction messengers are sent to cities and villages to prepare for His arrival. A Church is founded with regular commissioned ministers: Twelve are ordained to preach, to heal, and to cast out devils.

It might be thought that popular misgivings would have been allayed by the Personality of Christ, but the Gospels record expressions of unbelief. We gather that neither His appearance nor influence were such as to establish the fact of His other-worldliness beyond possibility of doubt, and His power of spiritual attraction seems to have been employed only just so far as to convince those who had spiritual sight and hearing. This was enough to reassure and confirm the faithful, but the greater number were so preoccupied as to see in Him nothing more than a teacher of undoubted fascination and a conjurer of exceptional cleverness. Signs are not wanting that even the disciples for a long time failed to perceive His true Nature. It was Peter who first realised that He was not

only a great Rabbi, a successor of the Prophets, but actually the Messiah. This revelation however was granted only to a powerful faith,—to the disciples, to the woman of Samaria, to the man born blind. The narratives leave no doubt that the outside world considered Christ a man of unusual gifts whose assertions were extravagant; and this feeling is recorded without attempt at concealment. The family history of the Nazarene Teacher is felt to clash with His claims as Son of God; expressions of doubt occur frequently. Within the family circle His brethren at first refuse to believe: it was impossible to credit such wild statements when they had known Him from a boy. His humility appears so strongly contrasted with His assertions that friends speak of Him as 'beside Himself.' The citizens of His native village being acquainted with His parentage say in perplexity: 'Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?'(a) The Jews indignantly deny His Divine Sonship before His face; 'Thou being a man makest thyself God.' It is the old mistake of dogmatising as to the way in which revelation will be made, and of discrediting the fact if it does

(a) Mat. 13^{55-56}.
cf. John 6^{42}.

not coincide with preconceived theory. Even the Baptist sends messengers from his dungeon to make sure that his sacrifice has not been in vain. It is clear that popular opinion, though admitting His greatness as a teacher, thought His Personal claims fanatical. There is perhaps no greater proof of Christ's humanity than the fact that such doubts existed.

We have already stated that Christ accepted the limitations imposed by an earth life and that His Divine powers were held in abeyance.* The exact nature of these restrictions is considered later, but it may be taken for granted that any power foreign in operation to an earthly sphere is abandoned. His course of action seems to follow the decision made at the time of the Temptation,—to use supernatural gifts temperately.† There are many indications, for example, of a limitation of knowledge, the most notable perhaps being those contained in the questions of Christ. Some of these no doubt are in order to gain touch with a sufferer, or to elicit faith, but this does not account for all. The question asked of the disciples—'Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?'—seems to imply a desire to learn the popular conception of His Mission; on another occasion He requests to be shewn the spot where the body of Lazarus was laid. The same characteristic is illustrated

* pp. 119, 120.

† pp. 176—179.

by the incident of the luxuriant fig-tree. Christ is hungry and approaches the fig-tree in the hope of finding something for food; but it is barren.'[a] The choice of Judas as one of the Twelve presupposes no clear foresight of the end, and in another place Christ admits such a limitation; 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.'[b]

It has sometimes been felt that the afflictions peculiar to human kind were robbed in His case of much of their bitterness, that His Body was not capable of experiencing the same physical pain as that which attacks the ordinary human frame. But there are no signs that this was the case. The sting of hunger and temptation were known to Him. The cruelty to which He was subjected was more terrible than that which usually falls to the lot of man, and seems to have been felt most keenly. He was kissed by a traitor, arrested, spat upon, buffeted, smitten, stripped, scourged, arrayed in royal vestments, blindfolded, mocked, reviled, bound: His brow was pierced with thorns, His side torn with a spear: and at the last His Body, tense with previous torment, was delivered to the tortures of crucifixion.

Christ had a human body, liable to pain and

(a) Mark 11^{13}.
(b) Mark 13^{32}.
cf. Mat. 24^{36}.

obedient to the normal processes of growth; He had also a heart subject to human emotions. The sight of a multitude, of sickness or sorrow, at once moves His compassion. He loves all mankind, especially Lazarus and St. John. Joy is recorded on only one occasion, on the return of the Seventy after a successful mission. He displays anger in face of wilfulness or obstinacy, an anger vehement, uncompromising, fierce, but which though stringent never becomes unbalanced. He upbraids disbelieving cities and is indignant at trafficking in the Temple; but it is the sacerdotalists who arouse His extreme wrath. It has been thought by some that He never forgave the degradation of the Scribes and Pharisees. There is no quarter in His denunciation: in terms of fearful censure He condemns them:—'whited sepulchres, . . . children of Hell.' He often longs for the solitudes of desert and mountain, but is sometimes assailed by feelings of loneliness when He seeks companionship. He seems to have felt the enticement of earthly power and to have wished for instantaneous success. The eating of the Last Supper with His disciples was the fulfilment of a great longing. He shews astonishment at the lack of faith and understanding among His followers. That they could be constantly with Him, hearing His words and seeing His works, and yet remain deaf to the voice of the Spirit is a

source of surprise. Again and again the thought is reiterated, 'How is it that ye do not understand?' That at the crisis of His agony those who professed to love Him could not offer so much as a friendly wakefulness astonishes Him. He Who fathomed the abyss of human weakness seems to the last to be almost startled by its depth.

His heart too knew the meaning of grief. He weeps over the lost opportunities of Jerusalem and over the tomb of Lazarus. He is saddened by faithlessness: the thought of the traitor distresses Him. He feels hurt at the ingratitude of the nine lepers and at the elaborate preparations which accompany His arrest. In the Garden of Gethsemane He is 'sore amazed,' 'sorrowful,' and 'very heavy.' And this mental suffering seems to have surpassed in acuteness the physical pain of a lingering end. Death is a kinsman to most men because of sin; there is a point of contact when the struggle comes. But it must have been abhorrent to a sinless Being, and the only place of attack that it could find in Christ was that He was Representative of a sinful world. Death is the child of sin.[a] And as the child of sin it symbolizes separation from God which without a Redeemer is the consequence of moral corruption. A life of sin culminates in the snapping of all connection between creature and Creator; 'the soul that sinneth it shall die.' It was this aspect of death that moved our

(a) p. 82.

Lord : this was something of the mystery which shrouded Gethsemane : it was this sense of desolateness which was the pain of the Cross. All the terror of the children of the world at separation from God was endured by Him to Whom communion with God was the breath of Life. The hours of darkness upon Calvary told to mankind of the darkness which clouded Christ's Soul ; that God's Face was hidden, and that He was with the sins of the world alone. That is a shuddering thought—to pass from the Face of God into the loathsome presence of sin. He felt that God had left Him when most He needed Him. And the dregs of grief were not yet drained. Christ literally died of a broken heart. The weariness of misunderstandings, the desertion of friends, the realisation that a life of untiring love was rewarded not merely by disregard or ingratitude but by a hideous cruelty, the frailty of even His near and dear ones, the perversity of human nature, the judgment hanging over Jerusalem ;—sorrows such as these killed our Lord before the exhaustion of crucifixion.

There can be no doubt that Christ was human in a very real sense, with human experiences and limitations, possessing a human body and a human heart, subject to human reverses and disappointments. And this suggests several important thoughts. The sketch in the Gospels is founded on a historical Person : Christ actually lived. The

story is told by men who were intimately acquainted with His life, ways, and thoughts; the evidence is first-hand. The incidents abound in minute details which would have been forgotten in the lapse of time and are too prevalent to be accounted for by imagination; they were recorded shortly after the events. The writers frankly chronicle doubts of contemporaries, personal limitations, humiliating defeats, without explanation or concealment. If they had been romancing they would not have been so faithful to fact. If they had wished to accentuate the extraordinary, they would surely have made use of the easy machinery of elimination in order to accomplish their purpose. We are justified in concluding that they are endeavouring to give an honest account of One Whom they knew. Their evidence therefore as to miraculous powers and events is the more trustworthy.

DIVINE CHARACTERISTICS.

In estimating the accuracy of the unique occurrences related in the Gospels we must bear in mind two points of some importance. First, that the theory of verbal inspiration is no longer generally maintained; and secondly, that there was a predisposition in the writers in accordance with the opinion of the age to believe in the miraculous. No object is served by overlooking facts. We must admit that at the time of Christ supernatural phenomena

would not be subjected to anything like the searching scrutiny which their acceptance would require to-day; and that in the accounts of such phenomena the presence of misunderstanding, exaggeration, or subsequent addition is at least possible. We stand now much in the same position as Christ's contemporaries; traces of superhuman power can still be rationalized or explained away. The question to be decided, however, is not so much whether this or that detail is credible as whether the whole cumulative effect is strong enough to establish a reasonable probability. And judgment must be influenced partly by the manner in which the incidents are recorded, whether extravagantly or unobtrusively, and partly by the extent to which such incidents harmonise with the rest of the picture. The evidence falls naturally into four divisions:—the testimony of supernatural events, of supernatural powers, of a supernatural Personality, and of supernatural claims.

If we consider these points in the above order, we are confronted first of all by a record of extraordinary events attending Christ's career. These are particularly prominent in connection with His Birth. An angel appears to Mary of Nazareth foretelling the birth of a son who is to be conceived by the Holy Ghost and is spoken of as Son of God. His throne is to be the throne of David and His Kingdom without end. Joseph, who is be-

trothed to Mary, is visited by angels in dreams, reassuring him as to the Child Who is to be born and warning him to flee from Judæa in order to preserve the Child from harm. At the time of birth, there are various startling incidents. Shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem see an angelic company who herald the advent of a Saviour; a star appears of such unusual brilliance as to induce Eastern sages to journey to Bethlehem.* At His Presentation in the Temple the Infant is welcomed by Simeon, whose presence was the result of a strange premonition, and received with prophetic words by Anna. These phenomenal events seem to have ceased for a considerable period, until the silence is broken by the voice of the first prophet for four hundred years. John the Baptist announces the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven and proclaims the coming of One mightier than himself. During the course of His public life Christ was in close communication with the other world. At His Baptism the heavens open, a Dove descends, and a Voice is heard. After the Temptation angels minister to Him. On the Mount of Transfiguration the dead hold converse with Him, His physical appearance

* A knowledge of astrology unknown to Western thought would indicate the country. Minute inquiries on arrival settled that Bethlehem was the destined birthplace of the Messiah; local inquiries would reveal the whole story and exact home of the Child. The star, which had first arrested the attention of the Wise Men, seemed to journey with them until they reached the inn.

changes, His face shines, His raiment becomes white, a bright cloud envelops Him, a Voice speaks from the cloud. This scene is attested by three witnesses. At the time of His Agony an angel strengthens Him. In the last tragic hours of His earthly life we read of an ominous dream reported by Pilate's wife, while the sympathetic horror of nature is shown in three hours' darkness, an earthquake, and the rending of the veil of the Temple.

Such phenomena can easily be accounted for. Apparitions, for example, may be due to a subjective condition of the brain. A great deal might be ascribed to imagination; —the descent of a Dove from heaven, the sound of a Voice; one explanation offered at the time was that it thundered. It is obvious that during the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, and presumably his two companions, were in a state of bewilderment.[a] The unusual occurrences of nature can be classified as coincidences; the tearing of the veil of the Temple was perhaps occasioned by the earthquake. And yet the reality of an appearance of a supernatural visitant to the individual is not lessened by explanations of mental condition; the process may be accounted for but the effect remains. Again, the cause of apparently supernatural phenomena may be attributed to natural principles,

(a) Mark 9^6.

but the important thing is that such phenomena did occur, and at a certain time and in a certain place. The impression left by the narratives themselves is that the writers are recording history. They calmly state what they believe to be true. Surprising details are given without ostentation and without comment, as though facts were being related which were already a matter of common knowledge. And there is nothing inherently incredible in such events. Admitting the interaction of the visible and invisible worlds we should be prepared for disturbances in the material order at the presence and death of the greatest Spiritual Force of the ages. Christ seems to be referring to this when He tells the Pharisees that even though the crowds were silent inanimate creation would acclaim Him. Psychic phenomena are not unnatural at the supreme conjunction of physical and spiritual forces, and such phenomena are recorded in the Gospels.

Primary evidence of the supernatural power of Christ is afforded by the miracles, which were the characteristic manifestations of a phenomenal Nature; but as the considerations which arise from them are numerous they must be reserved for special treatment.* It will be enough for our present purpose to examine one particular faculty which alone marks

* pp. 170 and foll

Christ as abnormal; and that is an abnormal faculty of insight.

It is true to say that He had a profound understanding of the ways of the world, a wisdom unique in its comprehension, and a knowledge impressive in its restraint.[a] His insight into character, especially in relation to the training of the disciples, has been traced in a most suggestive way by the writer of "Pastor Pastorum"; and a similar power was displayed in answering academic questions or unmasking the hypochrisies of opponents. He was able to read the hearts of men: "He knew all men. . . . He knew what was in man."[b] Nathaniel was astonished at His penetration.[c] The master-passion of the young ruler who came for advice, the need of the woman with the issue of blood, the searchings of heart among His followers, the presence of Zacchaeus, were immediately known to Him. He disclosed an intimate knowledge of her home life to the woman at the well of Sychar. He foresaw His own sufferings and revealed them to the disciples, though at first dimly. Betrayal, arrest, scourging, rejection by the people, insults, mockery, deliverance to the Gentiles, the manner and locality of death, are all specifically mentioned in various places. On two occasions this faculty was employed to facilitate preparations:—in the case of the

(a) cf. John 16^{12}.

(b) John 2^{24}—^{25}.

(c) John 1^{48}—^{49}.

tethered colt upon which Christ rode into Jerusalem,[d] and of the man with the pitcher who shewed to two of the disciples an upper room for the Passover.[e] As the end drew near, His foreknowledge became clearer. The identity of the betrayer was foreseen, the flight of the disciples at the arrest;[g] Peter's temptation, fall, and restoration, with a statement as to the precise time;[a] the final reunion with the disciples,[b] and the appointment of a meeting-place in Galilee.[c] The mention of these things which were to come to pass were for an express purpose: "that ye may remember that I told you of them."*

There were also wider prophecies extending beyond His lifetime; in particular that of the fall of Jerusalem, foreshadowed in no single apocalyptic passage but in words and actions throughout the course of His ministry. The Jewish nation had proved unworthy of their trust and the Kingdom of God was to be given to others.[d] That very generation was to be held responsible for the blood of all the

* It is at this point of the narrative that details are most likely to be coloured by subsequent events. But as the earliest account, that of St. Mark, was probably based on notes made by the disciples shortly after the Resurrection, many of Christ's words would be recalled and preserved within a comparatively short time of the occasion on which they were spoken. Even if all the above references are attributed to the natural bias of the writers, the more remarkable instances of foreknowledge, which follow, have still to be explained.

(a) Mark 14^{30}.
(b) John 16^{32}.
(c) Mat. 26^{32}.
(d) Mat. 21^{43}.
(d) Mat. 21^{2}.
(e) Luke 22^{10}.
(g) Mat. 26^{31}.

prophets.[e] The people were doomed, the land would be desolate.[g] The approaching fate of the Holy City moves Christ to tears.[h] "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children,"[i] He says to the daughters of Jerusalem as He goes to His death; and in words pregnant with foreboding points to the horrors of that famine which was soon to fall upon them.[k] In an eschatological passage of surpassing power, in which the end of the world is merged in that of the City, express mention is made of wars and national unrest, famines, earthquakes, and pestilence, prior to the siege, of the desecration of the Holy Place, of the flight from Jerusalem, and of the complete rasing of the town.[a] The sense of impending doom which broods over the Capital seems to have permeated our Lord's thoughts; and the narratives themselves are unconsciously impregnated with an atmosphere of Aeschylean tragedy, in which the Death of the Messiah and the irretrievable blunder of His countrymen form the catastrophe in the gradual unfolding of a deadly drama of events.

It may however still be urged by extreme critics that none of the Gospels reached their final form until after 70 A.D., and that such references are interpolated. Those prophetic

(e) Luke 11^{51}.
(g) Mat. 23^{37-38}.
(h) Luke 19^{41}.
(i) Luke 23^{28}.
(k) Luke 23^{29-30}.
(a) Mat. 24^{4-44}. cf. Luke 21^{8-33}.

utterances, therefore, are the most impressive whose fulfilment cannot be prior to the records in which they are contained. Christ predicted that in spite of commands to appear before kings and governors, of hatred on the part of the world, of the sundering of the closest ties of kinship, His followers would rejoice and that their joy could not be taken from them. This has become a fact of history. He asserted that opposition to Christianity would entail the ruin of the opposing force.(b) This was strikingly fulfilled in the collapse of the pagan Empire. His words, He foretold, would outlive heavenly and earthly systems. And this statement, it must be remembered, was made in the face of absolute improbability by the founder of an obscure sect in a secluded corner of the world. Supposing that all previous indications of foreknowledge had been invented by the writers, here at any rate we have words which in spite of a *prima facie* absurdity are found to be true after the Gospels have been in circulation for centuries; and there can be no reasonable doubt that Christ spoke them; there is then a strong presumption in favour of those cases which we are unable to test. And the last instance of all was when face to face with bitter failure, in sure knowledge of certain death, He calmly, deliberately asserted:—"I will see you again."(a)

(b) Mat. 21^{44}.

(a) John 16^{22}.

Let us mix now with the throngs in Palestine and watch how men are effected by Christ's Personality. We notice first His power of attraction. Vast crowds gather to catch a glimpse of the great Teacher: the multitudes are so dense that the people tread upon one another:[b] they hang upon His words, and follow Him until they faint for want of food. Pharisees and Doctors of the Law crowd from all quarters to converse with Him.[c] And as we stand in the throng snatches of conversation float up to us:—"is not this the Christ?"[d] "how knoweth this man letters?"[e] "when Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these, which this man hath done?"[f] "this is the prophet . . this is the Christ:"[g] "never man spake like this man."[h] It is agreed that the Baptist's witness of Him is true.[i] The people are astonished at His doctrine; they seem hardly able to credit their senses in identifying this Wonder-Worker as the carpenter's son. The Pharisees are for a time puzzled and entertain thoughts of His Messiahship: "if thou be the Christ tell us plainly."[k] His ways, however, are so contrary to their rigid conceptions that they soon adopt tactics of undisguised hostility. But even His enemies are unable to deny the

(b) Luke 12^{1}.
(c) Luke 5^{17}.
(d) John 4^{29}.
(e) John 7^{15}.
(f) John 7^{31}.
(g) John $7^{40—41}$.
(h) John 7^{46}.
(i) John 10^{41}.
(k) John 10^{24}.

astounding nature of His works and influence, and are compelled to ascribe them to devilish agency. His answers to their crafty traps stir involuntary admiration: "thou has well said." Rumour speaks of Him as John risen from the dead, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets. When popular enthusiasm is at its height there is an attempt to thrust an unwelcome sovereignty upon him.(g) Many of the chief rulers believe. The Sanhedrin is at loss to know what to do: "the world is gone after him" they exclaim in angry vexation.(h)

And His effect upon the individual is as marked as on the masses. Demoniacs shrink from Him. The sick instinctively trust Him. His is a nature to inspire devotion: a scribe declares with enthusiasm, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest":(i) Nicodemus risks a high position in order to pay nocturnal visits to the Teacher come from God:(a) "Blessed is the womb that bare thee"(b) cries a woman in the crowd. John hesitates to baptize Him, pointing Him out to two disciples as the Lamb of God. At the beginning of His Ministry Andrew and Philip perceive in Him the Messiah: Nathaniel recognises something more than human: the woman at Sychar sees before her a Prophet. In a social predicament Mary looks to her Son with absolute confidence: "whatsoever He

(g) John 6^{15}.
(h) John 12^{19}.
(i) Mat. 8^{19}.
(a) John 3^{2}.
(b) Luke 11^{27}.

saith unto you do it."(c) The trust of a woman in her Friend is unwavering even to the resurrection of her brother from the dead. The known integrity of Christ leads to a request that He should act as arbiter in an important dispute.(d) His fame spreads to the ears of Herod, who we are told "had been desirous of a long season to see Him."(e) The Roman governor marvels at the dignity of His Prisoner and protests belief in His innocence. The circumstances of His death elicit an involuntary exclamation from the lips of a centurion standing near the Cross: "truly this was a Son of God."(g)

Sinners were converted by their contact with Christ, and His influence for good is seen in the manner of conversation which came from the mixed crowds gathered about Him. And then we notice the effect which he exercised upon His followers; their dependence and trust were founded upon certainty of His Character. The sacrifices which they had made were of no account as long as they were with Him. And familiarity led to no diminution of their reverence; it deepened into confession of Him as Messiah, culminating in Thomas' cry of adoration, "My Lord and my God." He had, they knew it, the words of Eternal Life. Even the defaulter, who gambled so recklessly with his soul as stake,

(c) John 2^{5}.
(d) Luke 12^{13}.
(e) Luke 23^{8}.
(g) Mat. 27^{54}.

admitted at the last that he had betrayed innocent blood. And there was something commanding about His appearance; something unearthly in look or gesture which inspired awe. The disciples themselves felt this fear. Certain questioners never dared to question again. His appearance after the Transfiguration greatly amazed those who saw Him. His look could bring tears as in the case of Peter. It was more than once recorded that He passed through the midst of a crowd, probably not by means of miraculous locomotion, but by a certain majesty of bearing at sight of which no one presumed to raise a finger to stop Him. At the moment of arrest such was this dignity of presence that not one of the rough soldiers or attending rabble dared look Him in the face, but—"they went backward and fell to the ground."

The unusual events chronicled in connection with Christ's Life cannot now be put to the test, although the evidence upon which they rest comes from more than one source and is more weighty than that which is demanded in support of many historical facts. But the influence of Christ upon His contemporaries can admit of no doubt whatever; it appears at every stage of His career and alone accounts for the course of subsequent events. The name given to such a power, whether it be that of personal magnetism or some other, does not affect the question. That it was possessed by

Christ in a hitherto unknown degree remains an established fact.

But no survey of His Superhuman Nature would be complete without some mention of His claims. What did Christ say of Himself? He claimed in His own Person to supersede the authority of the Mosaic Law: "it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you."(a) One greater than Jonah, greater even than Solomon had come. His help was essential to the accomplishment of any work; His words would defy the passage of time. In Himself was power to forgive sins, authority to cast out of the Temple, lordship of the Sabbath. He was a Harbour for weary souls; the Fulfilment of the Scriptures; the Goal at which prophets and kings had gazed; the Bread of Life; the Light of the World; the Way, the Truth and the Life; the Resurrection and the Life; the Door of the Sheepfold, the Good Shepherd; a King without an earthly kingdom; the Source of Living Water and the Means of Everlasting Life. He claimed to be sinless and no one could refute Him; to have been sent forth by God and to be returning to God; to have power to admit to Paradise. He asserted a pre-existence before Abraham, revealed Himself to the woman at Sychar and to the man born blind as the Son of God, acknowledged Peter's declaration, admitted to the High Priest that He was the

(a) Mat. 5^{21-22}.

Messiah the Son of God,[a] said that He was One with the Father and that at the Last Assize Himself would be the Judge.

Of these claims, which may have sounded preposterous to those who first heard them, many in the course of time have been proved to be true while none have been shewn to be false. The Mosaic Law, for example, was rendered obsolete by the Sermon on the Mount: the interest of that which was at one time all-important is now contained only in its fulfilment. No Old Testament character overshadows Him in Whom the lines of Hebrew prophecy and expectation unite. That Christ means rest and peace to the soul is a fact of experience. That His Light has illuminated the world is a fact of history. The astonishing conception of founding upon a single Will and Person a worldwide, agelong Empire, has been entirely justified by events: what has been called "the most daring of all speculative dreams" has proved a success. And the statements of Christ are on a different level from those of anyone else in so far as there is no recorded instance of His being mistaken. There can be no question that He was in earnest when He claimed to be Son of God; no one would masquerade at the threshhold of death and least of all the Christ of the Gospels. It is equally certain that He was in earnest when He asserted that He would

(a) Mat. 26^{63-64}.

rise from the dead.(b) Granted that He was an abnormal character with unique power of attraction, well-balanced in temperament, never swayed unduly by the excitement of the moment, the Pioneer of humanity—how is it that One so superior to His contemporaries, so calm and deliberate in movement, so authoritative in speech, should make extravagant claims and foremost among them that He was the Son of God and that He should rise from the dead, if it was not true? That it was no delusion of the disciples we have already seen.* There can be no reasonable doubt that Christ spoke these words with a full understanding of their meaning. Is it probable—even if the supposition accounted satisfactorily for the facts related, which it does not—is it probable that in reference to Himself alone the Master made statements which by their lack of correspondence with fact condemn His veracity? Where it is possible to prove, Christ was right. In spite of improbability He was never at fault. As an assurance that He was unique among men we have the testimony of biographers, the opinion of contemporaries, the unanimous verdict of centuries. We can hardly do otherwise then than to concede the benefit of the doubt to those cases and claims which it is now no longer possible to establish.

(b) Mat. 12^{40}, 16^{21}, 26^{32}; Mark 9^{9-10}; John 2^{18-22}, 16^{22}.

*p. 87.

DIVINE HUMANITY.

We have ventured to review separately some human and Divine characteristics in the biography of Christ in order that the double strand which is woven in that Life may be more easily apparent: and we can see that the elimination of either element would destroy the symmetry and proportion of the picture, leaving nothing to account for the course of events. Denial of the humanity or Divinity of Christ explains everything but the facts. But as we suggested previously the process of differentiation leads to a point at which further differentiation becomes impossible even in thought, emphasizing the artificiality of any distinction whatever. In examining the Gospels we find certain incidents and attributes in which the two elements are inextricably woven together. We cannot tell where the one begins or the other ends.

The example of Christ taught effectively the mystery of material things. Not only are they instruments for the service of God and expressions of His Will, but they have spiritual counterparts, as it were. It is impossible to damage the one without damaging the other, just as wilful mischief perpetrated on the body must recoil on the soul. By an elevation of the human body to be the abode of Deity, and by repeated acts throughout the course of His earthly existence, Christ signified that a reality underlies the sensuous presentation of objects,

that a sanctity attaches to human things. In three accounts of the feeding of the five thousand it is expressly stated that the ordinary articles of consumption are blessed and broken before distribution.[a] The channels of grace appointed by Christ in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are water—the element of purification, and the chief nourishment of the earth and of the bodies of men—and bread and wine—the one the common food, and the other the common drink, in Eastern countries. The mystery of nature is enforced by a frequent use of parables to convey spiritual truths under the symbolism of earth. In the metaphors of the fourth Gospel Christ identifies Himself, the Son of God, with things and aspects of everyday life; "the Bread of Life," "the Light of the World," "the Door of the Sheepfold," "the Good Shepherd," "the Vine." "A woman in travail" proclaims a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. In speaking of death, Christ calls it "sleep," uniting the ideas in one. In the story of the Last Supper the entrance of Satan into final possession of the soul of Judas is closely related (in the mind of the writer at any rate) with the acceptance of the sop by the traitor;[b] the evil of his nature seems to have been aroused to fury by this channel of communication. And in the same connection an incident recorded in St.

(a) Mat. 14^{19}; Mark 6^{41}; Luke 9^{16}.
(b) John 13^{27}.

John's Gospel is significant. On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles Jesus stood up and cried—"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink"[b]—recalling to the minds of the vast assembly the inner meaning of what they saw, and identifying unmistakably His power to quench the thirst of human souls with the ritual of the feast.*

Nothing then is fortuitous. Everything becomes symbolic. The thoughtless actions of men in spite of themselves convey a deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface. Chance words express momentous truths; apparent trivialities are pregnant with vital consequences. And in this light various points of undesigned coincidence in the Gospels gain importance. The Mági offer gold, frankincense, and myrrh; a tribute to Christ's Sovereignty, a confession of His Divinity and an omen of His Burial. The acclamations of the populace during the last ride to Jerusalem, the garments and branches spread in the way, the colt upon which He rode, are an acknowledgment of His Kingly state. The ribald mockery and scoffing salutations of the Roman soldiery, the royal robe, the crown of thorns, the reed for sceptre, are a witness of His Majesty. The words of Pilate, "Ecce Homo" . . . "Ecce Rex," the

(b) John 7^{37}.

* Edersheim: 'Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.' Vol. II., chap. 6.

ironical superscription on the Cross, express a tragic and eternal truth.

And the two worlds are bound together so closely that characteristics of the one penetrate into the realm of the other. Christ is never more human than when in touch with invisible powers: He weeps before raising the dead, He sleeps before calming the storm: driven of the Spirit into the wilderness He is assailed by Temptation: the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane is the prelude to heroism on Calvary. And perhaps this is the reason why the imperfections of earth approach the joys of Heaven. No sooner had Christ descended the Mount of Transfiguration than He is met by a group of perturbed and faithless disciples: Peter's avowal of loyalty is followed by a triple denial: Hosannas are the prologue to the story of the Cross. It is always so. We are never nearer Heaven than when faithful on earth; and when nearest Heaven then earth's failures and disappointments are closest. And the presence of that other world is indicated by the importance which Christ attaches to solitude and prayer. In the midst of thronging duties this is an outstanding feature in His method of procedure. In spite of the business of the day, or the weariness of the body, He has recourse to a lonely place, sometimes a great while before dawn, sometimes throughout the night, in order to pray. To this practice He ascribes His powers of

healing.[a] It is this which gives authority over material substances,[b] and which is essential if the spirit is to maintain its supremacy. Prayer is to Him a source of strength before a crisis; before choosing the Twelve, before arrest and Crucifixion. In an hour of exhaustion nothing is more invigorating. Through its power the world of matter becomes obedient,* the heavens open,† and intercourse is established with the world beyond.‡

The Words of Christ teach both the vital union of soul and body, and the necessity of placing them in their true relation. Man is primarily a spiritual being: his body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost. But the exciting glamour of the material order has so injured spiritual health that the position is reversed;§ life is spent in the pursuit of worldly prizes. And the loss of perspective occasioned by sin induces blindness: and there is a stage worse than blindness. Moral vision may become perverted and see evil in good, ascribing to the devil the handiwork of God. This is unpardonable because irremediable. Such a state of spiritual astigmatism is chronic.[c] The fascination of pleasure is deadly, grave peril attaching to the possession of wealth;[d]

(a) Mat. 17^{21}.
(b) Mat. 21^{21}.
* e.g. Miracles.
† At Baptism.
‡ At the Transfiguration.
§ It is to this reversal that many of the paradoxes of Christianity are due:—e.g. The first shall be last, the saved life shall be lost, the least shall be great.
(c) Mat. $12^{24-31, 32}$.
(d) Mat. 19^{23}.

the parable of the rich fool illustrates the danger of covetousness and the madness of accumulating earthly goods:[f] "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And the reason is given: "the Spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is impossible to make earth and heaven both the end of life:[h] the one is to be used as a means to secure the other.[i] All hindrances are to be sacrificed,[a] ties of kinship disregarded,[b] so important is the stake at issue. Immoderate anxiety for bodily necessities is unwise; that which imperils the soul alone is a reasonable cause of fear.[c] Every effort must be devoted to the restoration of soul and body to their normal relationship, and this can only be achieved by a process of death. Death is the antecedent of life; "a death unto sin and a new birth." And since life is dependent upon the vitality of the Spirit regeneration must come from above: "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" a carnal birth must be carnal.[d] The instruments of this new birth are water and the Spirit,[e] and its mark a childlike innocence.[g] Subsequent growth is free and spontaneous like that of the lilies of the field; nourishment is provided by

(f) Luke 12^{16}—^{21}.
(h) Luke 16^{13}.
(i) Luke 16^{9}.

(a) Mat. 18^{8}.
(b) Mat. 10^{35}—^{37}.
(c) Luke 12^{4}—^{5}.
(d) John 3^{6}.
(e) John 3^{5}.
(g) Mat. 18^{3}.

the presence of Christ in the soul;[h] His Flesh and Blood are its energizing force, His Words its quickening vitality.[i] This process at work in the souls of men is called "the Kingdom of Heaven;" and the conditions of entrance are renunciation, humility, and unselfishness.

But the union of Divinity with humanity is nowhere more evident than in the character of Christ; it is as Man that Christ is most Divine. In Him human virtues are developed to a superhuman degree. Love, one of the highest attributes of human nature, above all, that love which renounces self on behalf of another, contains in Christ an element of unearthliness; He craved for man's affection when man's response was known to be death, and offered in return a passionate tenderness which braved the certain anticipation of faithlessness, mockery, and brutality, without faltering. Christ spent His life in ministering to those whom He knew at the last would crucify Him. His hands were stretched in blessing on the heads of those who were to pierce them. His feet were sore with a life-long service of those whose only gratitude was foreseen to be the nails of the Cross. It needs a more than human love to devote a life to exhausting labours for the sake of a people who are bent on murder. And then the courage of Christ was not a courage inspired by desperation, but

(h) John 6^{35}. (i) John 6^{63}.

the courage of One Who advances with unflinching purpose towards a goal in face of certain disaster. He had a power of forbearance unrecorded of any other great character. In the face of taunts He preserved a power of silence which compelled wonder.(a) His salutation to the traitor at an hour of bitter humiliation was more than human in its simplicity.(b) It is because He is God as well as Man that all virtues centre in Him. In others horror of sin may deteriorate into puritanism, gentleness into effeminacy, courage into bravado, submission into cowardice, aloofness into superiority: but this is not so with Christ. Love, purity, meekness, endurance, self-renunciation,—graces found in varying stages of development in human beings—all find in Him perfect expression. And this perfection exercises a separative as well as a binding force: these virtues form barriers as well as bonds of union with humanity. Because of this completeness of Personality apparently opposite characteristics blend without incongruity.* The loneliness of hill, desert, and night are connected with Him, and yet His is a familiar figure among the crowds that throng the shores of Galilee. A love of social intercourse is found with an aloofness even among His intimate friends. An optimism which converts the most depraved gives way to unrelieved

(a) Mark 15^5. (b) Mat. 26^{50}.

* C. H. Robinson: 'Studies in the Character of Christ.'

gloom at the thought of the catastrophe threatening Jerusalem. A commanding dignity of presence together with unprecedented claims are combined with lowly circumstances and extreme humility. He weeps at the death of a friend and over the doom of a nation, but forbids one tear to fall over the awful miscarriage of justice to Himself. From an overwhelming denunciation of the sacerdotalists of the day He passes to a heart-broken lament over Jerusalem. In Christ a thousand divergent qualities harmonise. There is no crowding or overaccentuation of detail. The picture in all its parts is balanced and proportioned.

Before the superhuman element may be banished from the Gospels, four points must be established with some degree of probability; first, that such a proceeding is necessary; secondly, that it is reasonable; thirdly, that it is desirable; and fourthly, that it is legitimate. In consideration of the facts outlined above we must assert that it is neither necessary, nor reasonable, nor desirable, nor legitimate. What of the theory of invention? Could any brain originate and execute so complex a character, representing the same person in different lights and shades from diverse points of view, with such subtlety of conception and certainty of delineation? Would not the task of marshalling this mass of multitudinous detail inevitably lead to confusion or extravagance?

And the theory of legendary development is unsatisfactory. Apart from almost insuperable difficulties of date and fact it is incredible that four writers, however great their literary genius, could not merely embroider the biography but recast the character of a notable philosopher without betraying themselves. The story of the Life of Christ, as we possess it, is not accounted for by theories of invention or accretion.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES*

In a rational age the miracle-worker is regarded as a conjurer or a charlatan, the mystification of whose tricks depends upon the obtuseness of his audience. If the regularities of nature are the expression of an unchanging Will, isolated instances of capricious interferences are inadmissable. If the machinery of the universe is automatic there is no room for the unaccountable. And this view is strengthened by the discovery that some of the miracles performed by Christ fall within the bounds of the non-miraculous; it has been recognised that a combination of unusual sympathy with a commanding personality was certain to exercise a beneficial influence on nervous disorders. A certain school of thought therefore favours the theory that around a nucleus of apparently miraculous, but now perfectly intelligible, cures accumulated legendary stories of control over inanimate nature; that the one class of phenomena

* In so far as miracles afford conspicuous evidence of Christ's phenomenal power some consideration of them would naturally have occurred earlier. (p. 148). But lest a detailed treatment should destroy the proportion of the general outline this chapter has been reserved as an appendix to the last.

is to be accepted as genuine, the other discredited; that the atmosphere of unearthliness which gathered about the Person of Christ was the direct result of such legendary romance; and that His only claims to Divinity were grounded upon a strong personal magnetism which in itself was no more extraordinary than modern powers of faith-healing.

To ignore however a series of well attested phenomena in order to bolster up a preconception, and then to presume to draw conclusions from the results so obtained, is as illogical as it must be untrustworthy. A great deal of confusion is due to popular misuse of the word miracle. The idea that the miraculous entails a contravention of law is unsound: and if the miracles of the New Testament are looked upon in the light of a dazzling display of thaumaturgical fireworks their position certainly is rendered precarious. But a phenomenon, however startling, is probably only an effect of which the corresponding cause is obscure. As Spinoza said, the occurrences related in Scripture, if real, were events of which the natural causes were unknown. Miracles do not necessarily imply magic, and the miraculous is nothing but the operation of a higher order of law than that which is usually observed; the supernatural is revealed in the natural, or as Mahomet put it "miracles are the works of Allah in nature." We have already noticed that the superimposition of one

stratum of law upon another is a common phenomenon in the world of objects; that the abnormal is not a contradiction but an extension of the normal. And the admission that the miraculous is subject to law, although that law is more elastic than physical regularities, is not a concession to the materialist or a denial of the essential nature of the spiritual, but a reassertion of the fact that two worlds are in one and that their principles are interwoven.

Many supposed miracles have already been found to be no miracles at all in the popular sense but the result of processes which in themselves excite little or no surprise. And it is conceivable that in time the secret of many of Christ's miracles will be learnt: as His powers were restricted to an earthly sphere such a discovery would not be unnatural. Archbishop Temple writes: "It is quite possible that our Lord's Resurrection may be found hereafter to be no miracle at all in the scientific sense . . . but the first instance of the working of a law till the last day quite unknown, but on that last day operative on all."* Professor Huxley states that "it may be improbable that a man should walk on water, be born without human intervention, rise again, but we cannot say that it is impossible for anyone;" and if not impossible it may conceivably occur again. Yet this does not invalidate Christ's claim to

* 'Science and Religion,' pp. 196, 197.

be Divine. The very fact that He was aware of and utilised the hidden forces dormant in nature indicates His Sonship of the Creator. And in so far as He was without sin it is safe to predict that the fulness of His power is beyond man's attainment: His miracles may be fathomed, some performed,—but never all. The miraculous, however, being fundamentally natural can never be used as demonstrative proof of Deity; and Christ Himself was careful to avoid even the appearance of overriding nature. The criterion of divine commission does not consist in an amazing parade of thaumaturgical efficiency but in a comprehensive knowledge of the possibilies latent in mankind.

Let us take for granted then that a miracle is nothing but the manifestation of a higher order of law than that usually operative in the physical world. The attribution of extraordinary faculties to Christ is in itself probable. Since He was not merely an intellectual giant or a sympathetic genius but a fully developed Personality and a Force without parallel in His own and succeeding generations, His ascendancy over the material world was correspondingly unique. If we can establish now both the reasonableness of the miracles recorded and also common principles by which they are connected,—principles obviously unrealised by the narrators but apparent in a comparison of the collective

accounts—and if we find that such principles are corroborated in various passages of teaching, we shall have reason for accepting the miraculous as genuine.

I. Laws of Motive.*

Thirty-four miracles of Christ are specifically mentioned, composed of twenty-six cases of healing and eight cases of authority over the inanimate world.† Each was performed with a definite purpose in view. In the first place owing to the short time in which His work had to be accomplished it was necessary to arrest public attention; "the advent of a new era had to be emphasized and paramount authority asserted." At that time and in that nation a display of supernatural power was recognised as the customary mode of proclaiming divine authority. "What sign shewest thou than that we may see and believe thee?"(a) Miracles therefore attracted notice and confirmed Christ's claim: "the works . . bear witness . . . that the Father hath sent me."(b) Another purpose which they served

* See Latham: 'Pastor Pastorum,' pp. 112 seq.

† In arriving at these numbers the two varying accounts of blind men cured at Jericho (Mat. 20^{29-34}; Mark 10^{46-52}) have been counted as different versions of the same case; the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4^{46-54}) and centurion's servant (Mat. 8^{5-13}), the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6^{32-34}) and four thousand (Mark 8^{1-10}) as separate miracles. The passing unseen through the crowd (Luke 4^{28-30}) and the miraculous draught of fish after the Resurrection (John 21^{4-8}) have not been included: the former for reasons already given (p. 156) and the latter as an event *per se*.

(a) John 6^{30}. (b) John 5^{36}.

was that of sifting the various temperaments of the audience: they differentiated between earnest listeners and curious sightseers. And accordingly different effects were produced among the bystanders; on the one hand fear, wonder, amazement, joy: and on the other, indifference, incredulity, surprise, anger;—the several fruits of faith and faithlessness, distinguishing a profound spiritual awe from that merely unhealthy excitement which takes a morbid delight in the abnormal. In cases of healing the particular cause and instrument of cure seems to have been Christ's sympathy with human affliction; there is no recorded instance of His being brought face to face with suffering or death without relieving it. A further purpose constantly present was that of teaching. Patients learnt that disorders of body, blindness and impotence and palsy, might equally attack the soul, and that Christ was the only permanent cure of both. The miraculous draught of fish foreshadowed the spread of Christianity among men; the walking on the water brought home to the disciples the truth of the abiding presence of their Master even when He seemed absent from them. In addition to such purposes as these was the cardinal motive of every miracle—"the glory of God"—expressly stated in the case of the man born blind and in the raising of Lazarus. But those motives which did not constitute a legitimate use of power are still

more noticeable, and the miracles without exception implicitly obey certain unwritten prohibitions. It would seem that in the wilderness Christ was first confronted with a consciousness of strength, and that the insidious force of the Temptation consisted in a desire to achieve success by an overmastering display of authority. The snare of all reformers beset Christ: He was tempted to enjoy the pleasures of a worldly empire at the same time as He laid the foundations of the Heavenly Kingdom. For a moment the jewels of an earthly crown sparkled before His eyes: the fascination of worldly dominion thrilled in His heart. But He resolutely swept them aside, and His renunciation was marked by a determination as to the ways in which His powers were not to be employed.

No miracle was performed for the gratification of personal wants or interests. Loaves might be multiplied for others but not for Self; the miracle at Cana relieved an awkward social embarrassment of the host as well as gave a sign and instruction to the disciples; to Him Whose prayer could have summoned more than ten legions of angels it was a divine impossibility to descend from the Cross. No attempt was made to obtain advertisement or self-glorification; secrecy was again and again enjoined or retirement sought from the attentions of the crowds. That there should be a marked absence of self-interested miracles,

nowhere commented on by the writers, is an important piece of negative evidence. Out of the thirty-four miracles there is only one apparent exception to this rule of procedure, —the incident of the stater in the fish's mouth.(a) By these means tribute money for the Temple was provided miraculously in the interests of Christ. But the conditions were peculiar. If the Master had paid in the ordinary way it would have been an acknowledgment of the right of the authorities to exact money from Him in support of His Father's House, and to this extent a denial of His Divine Sonship. On the other hand, refusal to pay would have conveyed a wrong impression to those whose circumstances were different. Thus for the good of those who might not understand a miracle was performed and the authorities satisfied.*

Secondly, no miracle was so overpowering in its nature as to compel belief. No display of force, however prodigious, could avail the spiritually blind or deaf, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead;" at a certain stage of moral deadness it could only increase obstinacy and guilt. Miracles therefore were not granted to wilful scepticism. And the wonder which they inspired

(a) Mat. 17^{24-27}.

* It must be admitted that this incident occurs only in St. Matthew's Gospel, and in that stratum of the Gospel which has least critical authority.

was graduated according to the degree of faith in the beholder. The transformation of water into wine, for example,—an incident admitting a comparatively easy explanation—was known to all the disciples present; the raising of Jairus' daughter and the Transfiguration, more bewildering in character, were revelations accorded only to unusually sympathetic natures. It is important to notice that in every case some plausible loophole of escape was presented which was actually used by many. The condition of death might be only one of catalepsy; and this solution of denying crucial facts is after all the easiest. The incident at Cana and the feeding of the multitude—so it might be argued—depended for success upon a pre-arrangement. The walking upon the water followed close upon an exciting period when the disciples would be enthusiastic and full of thoughts of their Master; conditions favoured hallucination.

The stilling of the storm and the withering of the fig-tree might have been nothing but fortunate coincidences. The miraculous draught of fish could be explained as due to an expert knowledge of the conditions of the water.

And thirdly, no case is recorded as in apocryphal legends of a wanton or capricious use of power: there is always some ulterior benevolent object. The story of the destruction of the Gadarene swine, which is still sometimes quoted as an instance of purposeless

mischief, is clearly beside the point. Christ is here pursuing that compassionate course of action characteristic of Him, and is concerned only with the cure of the demoniac. He did not claim on earth to legislate the bounds of evil which has a definite work, and which it was not His mission to destroy. Further He does not send the devils into the swine but merely refrains from forbidding them: if they intend to go He will not stop them: that is all. Again, the withering of the fig-tree forms an object lesson to the disciples of the peril of hypochrisy; external show may sometimes conceal internal corruption. The analogy between the tree—with its luxuriant foliage and lack of fruit—and the professions and barrenness of the Pharisees would be arresting. Officious critics of Christ's action have assumed that the withering of the tree is synonymous with the destruction of its usefulness; but this is surely an *a priori* assumption based upon no certain knowledge of the ultimate function of decay in nature.

II. Laws of Condition.

To ensure a successful cure something was required in the patient apart from our Lord. The primary instrument of healing undoubtedly rested in Himself, and the process was facilitated by an extraordinary gift of

sympathy. The account of more than one miracle is prefaced by the words "He had compassion"; His nature was such that He must bring relief to any kind of illness, His love extended to the bodies as well as to the souls of men. Thus from the first a sympathetic atmosphere was created between Christ and the sufferer. But this was not enough. Miracles were not to be forced upon men. The patient by hardened suspicion could prove antipathetic. A necessary condition of the miracle was faith, arising from an instinctive recognition of Christ's authority. And by this is meant not a recognition of His Divinity—that was a revelation granted to few—but an unwavering belief and trust in His Personality.

In picturing God in an act of mercy, who would have conceived the idea of its efficacy being conditioned by the attitude of the patient? Of the twenty-six miracles of healing no fewer than seventeen present remarkable instances of faith, either commented on by Christ Himself or implied in the description of the circumstances of the case. Of the remaining nine three are epitomised accounts giving the barest details,* while two are recounted for their effect upon the Pharisees who form the centre of interest instead of the

* The healing of the dumb demoniac (Mat. 9^{32-34}), of the blind and dumb demoniac (Mat. 12^{22}), of Peter's wife's mother (Mark 1^{29-31}).

patient.* This leaves four miracles of healing† in which no special signs of faith are remarked, and the absence of special mention here throws into greater prominence the undesigned emphasis given to this characteristic in the majority of cases. It is not surprising that the historians should have sometimes omitted to record a feature which was probably only partially understood at the time. The omission is most naturally explained by the absence of any special circumstance to impress the onlookers with that quality in the patient which from the cure we must suppose that Christ saw and rewarded. With knowledge no longer available as to previous relations, if any, between these four sufferers and our Lord conjecture only is possible. The almost superstitious belief which the impotent man exhibits in the troubled waters of Bethesda might well have been transferred in a nobler form to Christ. In the case of Malchus there would be no time in the hurry of the arrest to draw forth faith; the soldier must have heard some of the rumours current about his Prisoner, and a deed of violence inflicted by one of Christ's followers demanded reparation. The circumstances of the raising of the

* The healing of the man with dropsy (Luke 14^{1-4}), of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3^{1-7}).

† The raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7^{11-17}), the healing of the woman with infirmity (Luke 13^{10-13}), of Malchus' ear (Luke 22^{50-51}), of the impotent man (John 5^{1-9}).

widow's son at Nain are unusual and call for separate treatment.*

And the same condition of faith appears in the miracles of nature.† Each is performed in the presence of disciples or followers where faith would be germinating, if not matured. No miracle takes place in an atmosphere of professed scepticism or is overpowering in effect. In these examples of supremacy over the material order we can trace an increasing sense of wonder proportionate to the increase of faith. It would be easier to account for the phenomenal haul of fish or the ready supply of wine than for walking on the sea or calming the storm; the more startling proofs of paramount authority were reserved for the time when the disciples had entered more fully into their Master's purpose.

Now to contemplate somewhat more in detail the workings and variations of this condition, we observe how often Christ encourages and stimulates the faith of the patient;—by conversation, as with the Syro-Phœnician woman:(a) by questions, as in the case of Legion,(b) the blind man of Bethsaida,(c) the

* pp. 191, 192.

† According to the previous calculation these are eight in number—The miraculous draught of fish (Bethsaida), the transformation of water into wine, the stater in the fish's mouth, the feeding of the four thousand, and five thousand, the walking on the sea, the calming of the storm, the withering of the fig-tree.

(a) Mat. 15^{22-28}.
(b) Mark 5^{9}.
(c) Mark 8^{23}.

two blind men at Capernaum,[i] the blind men at Jericho.[k] And in this connection the interview with the parents of the demoniac boy is of the greatest interest. The case is a difficult one and has already baffled the powers of certain disciples. Christ first asks for medical details, and then speaks in a way which clearly shews the object of the foregoing inquiry: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."[a] At Nazareth He refuses to work miracles without faith in patient and bystanders,[b] and to confirmed disbelievers denies all signs except the sign of the prophet Jonah.[c] The delay caused by the cure of the woman with an issue of blood may have been a necessary stage in preparing Jairus for the supreme test. The presence of faith is shewn in many ways; by the voluntary coming of the sufferer:[d] by importunity:[e] by obedience,[g] notably in the case of the ten lepers who were cleansed on their way to fulfil regulations.[h] It is interesting to conjecture whether a subsequent loss of faith would entail a recrudescence of the disease. Fear must be entertained for the fate of the nine lepers whose momentary confidence was so quickly submerged by selfish considerations; faith must be perma-

(i) Mat. 9^{28}.
(k) Mat. 20^{32}.
(a) Mark 9^{23}.
(b) Mat. 13^{58}.
(c) Mat. 12^{38}.
(d) Mat. 8^{2-4}.
(e) Mat. 20^{30-34}.
(g) Mark 3^{5}.
(h) Luke 17^{14}.

nent if the cure is to last, and Christ's words of grief and surprise seem to be tinged by some such thought.

It harmonises with the above characteristics to find that records of healing at a distance occur only twice in the Gospels.* Faith was so faltering in most cases that the actual presence of Christ was necessary to reassure and strengthen; "except ye *see* signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But in the two miracles under consideration an exceptional faith was displayed which made the unusual method possible. If this device of healing by word at a distance had been due simply to the imagination of the authors, it would surely have been obtruded more often. A faith, however imperfect, is rewarded: in the storm on the Lake the disciples are rebuked for their terror, yet because they go to Christ with instinctive trust the source of their fears is removed. Failure of faith hinders the miracle and may be perilous: Peter's life is endangered on the water as soon as his courage wavers. To exceptional faith a special revelation is accorded: the loyalty of the man born blind, unshaken by the non-committal evasions of his parents or the menacing attitude of the Jews, receives a corresponding reward.(a)

* The case of the centurion's servant (Mat. 8^{5-13}), and the nobleman's son (John (4^{46-54}).

(a) John 9^{35-37}

The power of faith is seen in the case of an issue of blood, which though unusually severe is cured independent of Christ's volition when the sufferer touches His garment.[b]

III. Laws of Method.

It might be supposed that One endowed with superhuman power would use that power irrespective of the normal processes of nature; that material agencies would be superfluous to a Being from another world. An inventor in all probability would have surrounded his subject with an atmosphere of mysticism. But the Gospel picture shews Christ never so human as in the exercise of His phenomenal gifts. It is a heart full of sympathy that directs the act of relief; tears precede the recall of the dead. Christ enforces the alliance of earthly and heavenly forces not only by word but in the performance of miracles. Command of bodily frame and natural law is regulated in nearly every case through the medium of human instruments rather than brought to pass instantaneously by the mysterious action of the suprasensuous world; attention is focussed, not upon the surprising character of the deed, but upon its natural accomplishment. The clearest examples of this are the healing of the deaf and dumb men at Decapolis,[a] and the blind man at Beth-

(b) Mark 5^{25-34}.

(a) Mark 7^{32-37}.

saida.[b] The power of Christ is plainly exercised through material channels; the deaf does not hear, nor the blind see, nor the dumb become talkative—suddenly, but there is a definite process of cure. In the first case Christ takes the man aside, puts His fingers into his ears, spits and touches his tongue, looks up to heaven and sighs, before he speaks the word. In the second case the gradual process is even more obvious. He takes the patient out of the town, spits upon his eyes, puts His hands upon him, and asks him if he can see anything. The answer shews that sight was slowly returning; and when Christ had put His hands once again upon his eyes, "he saw every man clearly." As these are probably two of the earliest accounts of miraculous healing the detailed description is full of interest. The same characteristic is shewn in the healing of the man born blind.[a] Christ spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed his eyes with the clay, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Privacy is always obtained, if possible, and miracles are worked on individuals, not on masses; there is an entire absence of the startling. Commonplace means are utilised in affecting miraculous cures. Christ never gives strength to a belief in the extraordinary but accentuates the normal process; it is the throngs around who acclaim what they see as

(b) Mark 8^{22-26}

a brilliant exhibition of magic. This law of method can be traced throughout, though sometimes only faintly. Healing is invariably by touch as well as by word:* loaves are blessed and broken before their multiplication: Peter must go and cast a hook, the waterpots must be filled with water, the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, before a miracle is possible. And then the sudden suspension of ordinary principles is not prolonged or accentuated: normal conditions are resumed immediately. Jairus' daughter, newly restored from the dead, is given food: the fragments of loaves and fish are collected: instead of remaining inactive like a convalescent, Peter's wife's mother ministers to her Benefactor: the law of leprosy is fulfilled.(b)

Three specific instances of raising from the dead are given in the Gospels—Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus.* And whatever theories may be formed about them it must be admitted—first that the Evangelists themselves seem to have had no doubt that Christ possessed this power: secondly that destructive criticism has failed to discredit in any degree two of the above cases. Leaving aside for a moment the resurrection

* Except in the case of demoniacs where the affliction was mental.

(b) Mat. 8[4].

* The following description of these three miracles is based upon that given in Edersheim: 'Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah'

at Nain, we find the account of the raising of Jairus' daughter with unimportant variations in three Gospels, while the raising of Lazarus which appears in the fourth Gospel is essential to the coherent sequence of events; without the supplementary narrative of St. John the climax of sacerdotal hostility seems to be reached prematurely. Apart from the *prima facie* improbability of reanimation there is no sound reason for rejecting the resurrection of Jairus' daughter and Lazarus as historical facts. The evidence is weighty, and just those traits characteristic of invention are lacking. How far are theories of trance or catalepsy tenable? The daughter of Jairus appears to have died in the period which intervened between the departure of her father and the arrival of Christ;[a] and there was at any rate no doubt in the minds of the household that the girl was dead. The scenes customary to death in Eastern countries were already in progress:[b] the suggestion that she was sleeping was received with ridicule.[c] But the case of Lazarus puts all supposition of trance or catalepsy beyond the bounds of reason: the corpse had been entombed for four days and was already approaching a state of decay.[d] There are marked points of similarity between the two cases. Of both Christ uses the word "sleep" instead of death. He

(a) Mark 5^{23-25}.
(b) Mark 5^{38}.
(c) Mark 5^{39-40}.
(d) John 11^{39}.

shews great care in preparation. The actual miracle takes place in the presence of the closest relations,* and in both cases a wonderful faith is shown.

But as the scene enacted at Bethany is given in the greater detail it affords better opportunity for observing the different features which have already been mentioned as characteristic of the miraculous. In the first place the cause of the miracle was urgent. Christ's death was approaching: the disciples had to be strengthened by a final proof of the glory of God for the crisis which was at hand: the timorous had to be consolidated, the parties of believers and sceptics defined. Lazarus and Jesus had been friends, and something more;(a) the dead man is spoken of as Φιλός. Yet at the receipt of the news of his death Christ betrays no hurry or excitement: He acts deliberately in the consciousness of strength. After the lapse of some little time He arrives at Bethany to find Lazarus dead. There can be no doubt about that; Lazarus was dead. Jesus plainly asserted it;(c) he had been entombed four days,(d) and a number of Jews had gathered to comfort the bereaved sisters.(e) Then we observe the necessary condition of the miracles in the extraordinary faith of Martha and Mary in the Master;

* At the tomb of Lazarus there were several friends of the family as well.

(a) John 11^5.
(c) verse 14.
(d) verse 39.
(e) verse 19.

there is no reproach, only trust and understanding; "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."[a] Something too is required of those who are privileged to behold the miracle: the stone first must be rolled from the mouth of the tomb. And the vivid picture of Christ accords with the principles which we have been considering; the calm of divine power struggles with human affection for the mastery. At the moment of an unearthly manifestation of strength He is assailed by mortal weakness: He recoils at the presence of death.[b] Then looking up to heaven with a petition that the faith of the watchers may be strengthened He cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The commanding tones of authority recall the soul as it hovers on the borders of the other land, and amid the awestruck silence of the little group Lazarus comes forth from the tomb. This miracle is indispensable in that it precipitated the crisis. Although many of the Jews who were present were converted,[c] others whose incredulity had been aggravated into hatred by this revelation of power hurried off to summon a meeting of the Sanhedrin.[d] Soon afterwards theories of imposture were convincingly formulated and the safety of Lazarus was imperilled;[e]

(a) verses 21-22-32.
(b) verses 33-38.
(c) John 12^{11}.
(d) John 11^{46-47}.
(e) John 12^{10}.

but the facts of the case became so widely known that crowds flocked to see both Healer and healed.(g)

The incident which occurred outside the city of Nain differs somewhat from Christ's usual methods of procedure in that the miracle is performed in the publicity of the highway. It would seem that seclusion was always obtained if possible, particularly in a case of a recall to life where the effect upon those present would necessarily be bewildering; in such cases Christ's custom seems to have been to allow only intimate friends to remain in attendance. But the raising of the widow's son forms an exception to this rule. Another peculiar feature is that this miracle did not take place at the end of the Ministry when all possibility of national enthusiasm had gone, but according to St. Luke at the beginning. And yet perhaps the strongest evidence in support of it lies in its unusual character. We have already mentioned that it was necessary, especially at first, to attract attention; and this early miracle of resurrection from the dead with all its attendant publicity may well have been for the purpose of arousing something more than a local curiosity. The immediate result would be the spread of the new Teacher's fame throughout all Judæa and the neighbourhood.(a) As time progressed, the need which had occasioned so striking an

(g) John 12^{9}.

(a) cf. Luke 7^{17}.

exhibition of power passed away, and owing to the unwelcome attention of the crowds fame became undesirable. At any rate except for the reasons given above there is no cause to doubt the historical fact. The brief sketch depicts Christ accompanied by disciples and followers. The party doubtless were already enthusiastic in their loyalty to the Master owing to His works and words, and as a funeral cortége proceeding from the town came into view whispered expressions of hope and anticipation may well have passed among them;—were the reports of the Nazarene Rabbi correct? had He power to restore to life? The band of mourners, the widow's pathetic figure, made an instant appeal to Christ. We do not know whether He had met them elsewhere, or what the preparatory circumstances may have been. The bearers unquestioningly obeyed His gesture: that is all we are told. A point of internal agreement between this account and those of the raising of Lazarus and Jairus' daughter is the imperious command to the dead: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

A few words more must be said about the cases of demoniac-healing which have an important bearing on the general credibility of the miraculous. Having had occasion to mention in another connection some of the peculiar features of possession* we will here

*pp. 71, 72.

consider only those characteristics which are common to the various narratives. There is a general recognition of Christ's Divinity which is recorded in no other form of malady: "and unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God."(a) The symptoms are similar in all accounts; fierceness and self-mutilation,(b) multiple personality,(c) an exceptionally severe paroxysm in the presence of Christ.(d) The sufferer never asks to be healed,(e) as in other cases, and no mention is made of physical contact.*(f) These small details of unanimity are only apparent in a close comparison of the various accounts and add considerably to the probability and coherence of the events narrated.

Let us conclude with a short review of the ground which we have traversed. In estimating the authenticity of Christ's miracles a process of selection is illegitimate. No special stress is laid upon nervous derangements. His power extends to "all manner of

(a) Mark 3^{11}; cf. Mark 1^{24}; Mark 5^{7}; and parallel references.

(b) Mark 1^{26}; Mark 5^{3-5}; Mark 9^{20}.

(c) Mark 1^{24}; Mark 5^{9}.

(d) Mark 1^{26}; Mark 9^{20}.

(e) Mat. 8^{16}.

* The only apparent exception is the case of the demoniac boy (Mark 9^{27}). But the unclean spirit had already rent and left him as dead, before Christ took him by the hand and lifted him up.

(f) Mat. 8^{16}.

sickness and disease."† The authority for the healing of the almost incurable disease of leprosy is equal to that which supports any of the other cases: and the same is true of the raising of Jairus' daughter. The illness might be chronic:(b) men are cured as well as women. Again, there is no justification for accepting the miracles of healing and rejecting those of nature. Three Gospels record the walking on the sea, the stilling of the storm, the multiplication of loaves. In one case, that of the man born blind,(c) we are told of the closest investigation both as to accuracy of story and identity of persons, an investigation conducted on the spot by certain incredulous Jews which in spite of every inducement and threat to the contrary failed to make the defendant depart a hairsbreadth from his original assertions. There is no attempt on the part of the authors to parade the abnormal: many miracles are unrecorded.(a) And lastly, the narratives are united by a general consistency and an internal delicacy of agreement; discrepancies are concerned with minor details, not with fundamental principles. The miracles, related by

(b) John 5^{5}. (c) John 9^{1-34}.

† General catalogues give—possessed with devils, evil spirits, unclean spirits, lunatic, palsied, dumb, maimed, infirmities, plagues. The message sent to the Baptist (Mat. 11^{5}) contains—blind, lame, lepers, deaf, dead. Particular instances recorded supply roughly the following numbers—lepers 11, demoniacs 6, blind 5, dead 3, fever 2, deaf and dumb, dropsy, infirmity, impotent, withered hand, issue of blood, surgical, 1. These figures make no allowance for miracles referred to, but not detailed.

(a) John 20^{30}.

different writers from different standpoints, obey a series of unwritten laws. To what origin are these laws to be assigned? They are not obtruded: the writers seem to be unaware of them. In condition and circumstance they are unexpected, but neither fantastic nor bizarre. No conclusion surely is more reasonable than that the narratives are founded upon a single Life from which those laws proceed.

And if we confront this conclusion with scientific belief and human experience, what is the result? We see the interdependence of soul and body in the patient, of matter and spirit in nature, recognised consistently by Christ and faithfully, though unconsciously, reflected by the Evangelists. We have His repeated assertion that these two elements ever work together, that the spiritual is the master of the material, and that to faith, absolute command of matter is possible; "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done": [a] and "this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer." [b] Apart from the credibility of alleged psychic phenomena, without reference to the claims of Christian scientists and faith-healers, we have the express declaration of Jesus of Nazareth (and it is the declaration of

(a) Mat. 21^{21}; cf. Mat. 17^{20-21}; Mark 11^{23}.

(b) Mark 9^{29}.

One Who has never been found in error) that in the strength of the Spirit miracles fall within human range: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also."(c) We watch Him in the sober use of His power. We see the disciples exercising a similar power through faith in their Master. We read of the Twelve victorious over unclean spirits, sickness and disease, the Seventy endowed with a like authority; Peter enabled to walk on the water; even one who is not a disciple exorcising devils in Christ's name. We know that unusual faculties were possessed by individuals not only in the first century of the Christian era, but from time to time in succeeding ages. We can test for ourselves the efficacy of prayer and the might of a magnetic personality. Is all this consistent with the testimony of Christ as to the strength of the Spirit and of faith? Was any object served by making such a statement if it was not true? And is the blame to rest with Christ if His promise has been disappointingly fulfilled? Men too often regard His words as figurative. "It is Hebrew hyperbolism," they say—"striking, but unpractical. We cannot believe in a literal interpretation. That was an exceptional epoch. We live in the twentieth century and miracles have ceased." It must be candidly acknowledged that Christ's pronouncement on faith is disbelieved: we find it easier to rationalize and reject than to obey

(c) John 14^{12}.

and fulfill. But in proclaiming the power of the Spirit by precept and example Christ was enunciating the principles not of Christianity but of humanity, and to rob His promise of its meaning is to impoverish life. The fact that many of His miracles were achieved by forces common to human nature, instead of refuting His claims, corroborates His teaching and inspires hope. It remains for us to trust: to put Christ's injunctions to practical use. And we shall venture upon the tracts of unexplored country, which still lie between us and the manhood of the race, with the assurance that His sanction rests upon us, that we are traversing another distance towards our goal:

> "Strengthen the wavering line,
> Stablish, continue our march,
> On, to the bound of the waste,
> On, to the city of God."

CHAPTER IX

PROOF AND POWER OF CHRISTIANITY

The effects as well as the facts of Christ's Life require explanation. The solution that He was nothing more than an idealised human being accounts neither for the unusual details of His biography nor for His lasting impression upon the human race. The question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" is as crucial to-day as it was nearly two thousand years ago: and no rational being is justified in postponing the answer indefinitely. Is there sufficient material upon which to form a final judgment? The position is as follows.

In endeavouring to solve the riddle of life we are perplexed by an apparent dualism of everything. It is open to us to regard this as a semblance obscuring reality and to deny its existence. The result in the one direction is materialism: in the other, idealism. If one side of dualism is ignored advance is made in scientific knowledge: principles governing the material universe are disclosed: man is emancipated from degrading superstition, and freedom of action secured. But we are not satisfied with this as an interpretation of life.

Science touches but a portion of reality. Much is left unexplained; above all, that which is the essence of personality. If the other side of dualism is ignored, mind and will predominate and transcendental philosophies hold the field. But still we are left unsatisfied. Idealistic creeds, admirable in the abstract, have little in common with life as we know it. They are unreal and unpractical in application, appealing only to a portion of our composite nature. It would seem that satisfaction can only be derived from an acknowledgment that this dualism exists, whatever its source or final resolution. In the world in which we live there is a constant interaction of mind and matter, of soul and body. These are two sides of reality. The apparent is the real: the senses are not deceptive. And if we examine the history of this planet under the searching light of this belief much becomes plain. Everywhere we trace a double strand, each thread of which is inseparable from the other; on all sides we perceive an unending combination and interdependence. But something still is wanting. A continual friction frays the bond that unites. There are discords instead of harmonies, enervation instead of tension, problems instead of parables, feebleness instead of power. The connection is not always complete: sometimes it seems to be repudiated, when found. If these two elements are only

different faces of the globe of reality, if they are essentially and always united, we should expect to find somewhere the perfect example of such union. And history gives us this in Christ. In the Incarnation the problems of dualism are solved, and the solution satisfies, though far surpasses, reason. The twofold nature of Christ consummates the twofold element of existence uniting it for ever in His Indivisible Personality. His words and works bear witness to the reality of the divine and human and to the eternity of their conjunction. He is at once the Source and End of Life. The converging streams of Being pour into the ocean of Incarnate Godhead.

Upon the Person of Christ has been founded a religion which professes to be the final revelation of God to man. Above all religions of the world it supplies a coherent explanation of the enigmas of existence. It is the fulfilment of previous tendencies, endowing spiritual evolution with a method and a purpose. Though complete with all that is best in every department of human activity, it remains free from triviality or misguidance. No doctrine of Christ is marred by error. The fragments of truth laboriously acquired by past ages—the conclusions of Greek philosophy, the religious conceptions of Persian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian mythology—are presented in Christianity without the encumbrance of superstition; the

noblest aspirations of previous systems are incorporated into one pure universal religion, unstained by imperfection and vitalised by the inspiration of Christ's undying Presence. And it is the fulfilment of the Jewish religion in particular; the lodestar irradiating the gloom of desert-wanderings, oppression and captivity. Hebrew history, the prophetic gift, the Temple ritual and sacrifice, are mushroom growths unless carried to their logical conclusion in Christianity. If exalted conceptions of Christ's Person are removed, two of the most powerful influences in history are left desolate, without cause, illogical, inexplicable, —the Jewish religion and the Christian Church.

We can trace a well-defined, continuous development of man's religious instinct from the earliest days, from the dawn of self-consciousness to a realisation of Supreme Deity or Deities which appeared under different forms in different countries; and within this area we perceive a gradual revelation of the Nature of God to the Jews. These are the two concentric circles of religious evolution, and the centre of both is Christ. And more than this, Christianity satisfies the cravings of personality, that indefinable yearning for something beyond the limits of visible things. It proclaims the reality of an unseen world and denies the finality of death. It provides an answer to the feverish questions of philosophy.

It not only shews the way, but gives the strength to follow. In the light of Christ the goal of life is seen to be neither the indifference of the Stoic, nor the exuberance of the Epicurean, nor the absorbing idolatry of self, but the Kingdom of Heaven. A link is found at last to bind together the diverse units of mankind as children of one Father.

To understand the wonder of God's revelations, their extent and symmetry of design, it is necessary to contemplate them as a whole. The web of pre-Christian tendencies must have presented to the unconscious weavers a network of intricacies and complications: threads crossing and recrossing, appearing, disappearing, interlacing, in apparently inextricable confusion, here and there indicating premeditated plan or the controlling Mind of the Master-Weaver, but even to the most enlightened a strange tangle. With those however who live in the centuries after Christ the case is different. Placed as it were upon a pedestal we mark the outlines of human Redemption—orderly, homogeneous, inevitable, leading to and perfected in Christianity. But though the solution is what brain and heart demand, there remains something in its nature to inspire awe. It is at once the realisation of Jewish aspiration and yet so radically different that Jewish beliefs of the first century of the Christian era were incompatible with those of Christ. While it embraces every

phase of life, it is not of this world: it lacks the blunders of an earthly organisation: its impress is beyond that of human ingenuity. While it has a point of contact with earth, the centre of gravity is elsewhere.

And the course of history has proved Christ's claims. The spell of His influence to-day is as potent as when He trod the hills and plains of Palestine; miracles in the twentieth century are so common as to pass almost unnoticed. Men, women and children in a blind pursuit of shadows, deaf to the arguments of reason, a moral wreckage, outcasts of a Pharisaical society, gripped by passion and ground in the mill of indulgence, abandoned by their fellows as lost beyond hope of recall—are still rescued through belief in Him. What need to probe, to question, to criticize, to condemn the healing of bodies, when His Presence is known to cure and comfort souls? There is only one reason to account sufficiently for this stream of events: "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin,"—a power which can never wax old or become obselete, for "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The truth of His abiding Presence is attested by the deathless strength of His religion. It expands with expansion of thought revealing something new to every age. After two thou-

sand years it is not exhausted. Age can bring no decay, the roll of centuries cannot dim its lustre. Christianity can never pass away for it has as many sides as life, and life itself is infinite.

It is unscientific wilfully to ignore such facts as these. To regard as a monstrous delusion that which the experience of millions has found vital is presumptuous. What other explanation can be offered? Cheerful companions join us at different stages in life's journey. Ingenious contrivances are multiplied to intensify the pleasures of the moment, philosophical anodynes to deaden weariness and pain. But there is only one Comrade Who is willing to journey the whole way with us. Life is a straight line from the seen to the unseen, a straight path from sunrise to sunset, and if it is to be happy throughout Christ must be the end as well as the beginning, the goal as well as the first cause. It is easy to point to some whose paths seem bright, though they walk alone; but he was wise who said, "Call no man happy until he is dead." Everything must be sacrificed to retain the Presence of Christ; in no sin or shame must He be allowed to depart, because no man can tell when that moment will come when, if He is not at hand, the shades of a long night will settle upon his soul.

"Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."*

His Birth is the beacon of chronology, His Life the pivot of civilisations, His Person the meeting point of ages and the cradle of the years. A clear stream of religious development flows from the dawn of humanity to the present time, more permanent, more coherent, more comprehensive than any physical or political growths. Its significance is plain. It is the one abiding factor in the ceaseless change of the universe. Amid tottering empires, unstable constitutions, evanescent civilisations, it is possible to point to one element at least which never moves back, and which to-day can trace its ancestry in an unbroken line to the birth of the race. The half-mocking, half-baffled question of Pilate comes ringing down the ages—"What is truth?" Let us ask of the restless speculations of the ancient world, Had they the secret of knowledge? Let us ask the dead Pilate, Was he ever nearer the truth than when face to face with the Nazarene Prisoner? Let us ask it of two thousand years' experience of Christ's stupendous assertion—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

* F. Myers: 'St. Paul.'

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

αἰλινὸν αἰλινὸν εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.

CHAPTER X

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

In learning to appreciate the appeal of Christianity to brain and heart we come to the end of our journey, and discover that our work still lies before us. In investigating principle and belief we lay foundations whose one purpose is to uphold the superstructure of life and conduct, and we can hardly leave the subject without shadowing at least some kind of building. It is not, however, our purpose to use the pages that remain in discussing prevailing codes of morality, but rather to endeavour to find some practical application of those generalisations which formed the basis of the earlier chapters.

The spirit of Christianity, its unselfishness and love, can only be preserved by a true understanding of the Person of Christ; and if it is to become a reality it needs the vigorous discipline imparted by a regular organisation. The guidance of Church and the stability of creed are imperative in the flux of speculation and devotional laxity. Those who deprecate the formation of a definite religious body on the ground that communion with God is best

obtained in solitude, that the presence of others tends to produce distraction or formality, overlook the fact that co-operation is as vital in the exercise of spiritual as in the development of bodily faculties. The dependence of one personality upon another endows corporate worship with a special power. In the only experiences of which we can have any knowledge the soul expresses itself through the body, the material and spiritual are interwoven : this is the natural order. And so with religion. Religious energy must have a material channel of activity. It was in recognition of this that Christ founded a Church, with a Ministry and Sacraments. A visible Church, Creeds, and Sacraments are essentials of religious life.

Material organisations however must be elastic. Since the function of the body is to serve the spirit, rearrangement and revision of method or ceremonial—far from indicating restlessness—are changes demanded by the expansion of inward life. Without a continual readjustment of the delicate relationship which exists between them, the material tends to overgrow and cumber the spiritual—a danger attaching in particular to religion. Exaggerated importance may be attributed to externals, to the requirements of custom and ritual, in forgetfulness of the purpose for which those externals exist. It is only too easy to drift imperceptibly into a wrong course, to give rein

with mischievous results to a misdirected zeal. Criticisms of the methods of the Church do not imply disloyalty. If defects exist, it is vital that they should be recognised.

And signs are not wanting that something is wrong with the modern interpretation of Christianity. In a professedly Christian country a large proportion of the population could hardly be called Christian. A callousness prevails between the Church and the mass: the fire of religion barely warms the hearts of the people. While there are indications of a quickened enthusiasm within the Church herself, and within the country an unexampled religious curiosity, these tendencies present parallel lines of advance with little mutual sympathy. And perhaps the reason why a religion which imparts to life a freshness and purpose has so small an influence upon the spiritual cravings of the day may be found in an East Londoner's comment: "It isn't that we have anything against your religion; the whole thing doesn't touch us any closer than the moon."* This expresses the position briefly: the Church is no longer an arresting force. Her mediation, for example, is ignored in political or economic crises, and rightly. How could a society be consulted which is at war with itself? which betrays an ecclesiastical exclusiveness on the

* Quoted by Dr. Lang in 'The Opportunity of the Church of England.'

one hand and a worldly preoccupation on the other? Yet if it is true that the Ministers of Christ hold in trust the secret of knowledge, if it is true—as facts would seem to shew—that men and women are searching for some guidance, it is indeed pathetic that they should walk side by side uncommunicating, misunderstanding and misunderstood. Some fault, no doubt, lies with the unrest of the world and the imperfections of human nature. But the Church has done so much in the past that there is reason to pause and ask—if all be well with Her now? whether She has not failed to adapt Herself sufficiently to a changed environment.

The cause of the trouble seems largely to be this: that the machinery of the Church of England threatens to become clogged with externals. In the first place She is tied to Her local temple. While the bulk of the people ignore the truths of eternal life, the Church remains absorbed in the conduct of Her services and the performance of a self-imposed routine. It is only fair that the few who are loyal should have first claim upon Her counsels in difficulty and Her comfort in sorrow. But surely it cannot be right that a select and little changing congregation should be made the centre of religious activity, when the mass of souls is unshepherded? Those whose godless lives need untiring supervision are just those who

under present conditions are most quickly deserted. In the routine of a parish priest what proportion of time is devoted to that apparently unprofitable work of attempting to rescue the irreclamable, compared with the hours spent on meetings, classes, services, visits and private ministrations on behalf of members of the flock? When the phrase, "a club which caters for its members," can be applied with any sort of truth to the Church, it is evident how far she has drifted from the ideals of earlier days. Yet it would be unfair to suggest that no steps are taken to evangelise the country. In every parish strenuous endeavours are made to this end; but strength which ought to be devoted to this branch of work is already drained by the multitudinous demands of the system. The wheels of ecclesiastical machinery revolve with sundry creaks and groans. For the charge of limitation is not unfounded. The Church is slow in leaving Her strongholds and taking the field: Her energies are devoted to those who spiritually least stand in need of such ministration. And within She is tied by Her order and ceremonial. Prayers by repetition may become formulæ, and lack of diversity tends to produce a sensation of monotony. Set forms have their use, but when they are regarded as the only means of public worship the danger of formality becomes great.

We have mentioned the conservatism of the

Church and Her limitation to local sanctuaries. Another direction in which the spirit of Christianity seems to be shadowed by the letter is the emphasis laid upon an orthodox faith. Articles of belief have been multiplied by an accentuation of non-essentials. Questions of subsidiary interest are placed in the forefront of the field, while truths common to Christianity and life alike are thrust into the background. Details of ritual engross more attention than the facts of Christ's Life, and it is thought to be of the first importance to be a good Churchman rather than a good Christian. The pulpit too often is regarded as a suitable place for an *ipse dixit* on controversial subjects or some explanation of ceremonial usage. The world is asking for the bread of spiritual life and sometimes is offered only the polished pebbles of an unsatisfying dogma. But the power of Christ's Teaching did not depend upon expositions of ecclesiastical legislation, but upon the vitality inherent in what He said; His words were Spirit and Life. The penalty of death which He assigned to unbelief[a] was not in punishment of intellectual difficulty, but of a spiritual blindness; the subvergence of the spirit in the letter of the Law was the curse of Rabbinism, and Christ refrained from binding future generations with precise regulations. Doctrine, dogma, creeds are after all only a series of kaleidoscopic pictures presenting

(a) John 8^{24}.

from different aspects and in a variety of permutations the eternal verities; it is the unchanging background that gives tone to the varied patterns. Faith is neither intellectual assent in a number of theological propositions nor a synonym for orthodoxy, but rather that inward perception which apprehends and interprets truths of a spiritual nature. Expediency may demand definitions of belief, expansion of religious thought entails expansion of creed: but without the spiritual energy of faith to galvanize it into life the framework of doctrine remains dust.

Surrounded by a bewildering array of requirements men despair of distinguishing essentials from non-essentials; if a single pronouncement cannot be reconciled with reason the whole system is condemned. And the fact that enthusiasm is chilled by a religion which magnifies accessories to some extent would seem to explain the deadness of the Church at the present time. A mass of academic theology has been wound about the Person and Teaching of Christ: the body of Christianity is stifling in trappings and winding-sheets; the clinging garment of ceremonial threatens to become the heavy robe of sacerdotalism. It is too readily forgotten that dissension, dogmatism, limitation of outlook, are due, not to Christianity, but to an imperfect presentation. The impression that the Church is nothing but a sect must be

combated at all costs. No policy of quietism can be justified so long as a belief prevails that a change from the worship of science or philosophy to that of Christ is a step from the expansive to the confined, when it may and can be shewn that the step is one from the less to the greater, from the general to the universal, from a glimpse of creation to a comprehensive view of the purpose of the Creator.

The result of attaching value to the circumstances rather than the principles of Christianity is to promote sectarianism. Ministers whose privilege it is to build up the Body of Christ have become the centre of dissension: teachers, pastors and evangelists, by laying stress upon externals, by obtruding personal views, have been the means of encouraging strife. The Christian Society has become composite, a mixed crowd of every shade of moral opinion, illustrating every variety of practice in conforming to principle, and lacking that force and uncompromising zeal which characterize union. And the evils of lax membership have followed. Regeneration and spiritual travail have grown old-fashioned: the necessity of sitting down and counting the cost has passed away with the passing of obligation. Yet in spite of a superficial disagreement a Brotherhood exists on the rock of the Christian Revelation, a Brotherhood whose motto is tolerance

not contention, whose conditions of membership are belief in Christ and love of Christian principles. Misunderstanding, unauthorised interpretations, prejudice, may have estranged the various bodies, but if only the spirit were placed foremost material excrescences would be absorbed. Reconciliation does not necessitate wholesale abandonment of principle,—such a course would create a morass of uncertainty,—but a clear discrimination between essentials and non-essentials, the surrender of the value attached to personal opinion, an attitude of moderation, and a grasp of the vital realities of life. The meeting ground is the Incarnation, and the truths held by Rome, Constantinople and Canterbury: not the beliefs popularly attributed to those Churches but their professed beliefs. The day may yet come when the scattered members of the Christian Community will reunite. The widespread influence of our country promises to be a powerful factor in this cause, and the eyes of the world are turned towards this land. But if our help is to be of any use we must be the first to rid ourselves of that spirit of dogmatism. It may then be seen that good will have resulted from the disruptures of the past. The treasures of different ages, countries, and sects will be gathered into the main body. "O pray for the

peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."*

It is a crucial period in the history of the Church of England. Modern criticism is bold and unconditioned. The Christian creed is weighed in the balance and sometimes found wanting—not because its doctrines are false but because they are misunderstood. The depth of Christian truth is forgotten because its special application to the needs of the time is not always made clear. And here arises the fault of the crowd in that it allows itself to be led away by intellectual conceit, mistaking a superficial acquaintance with facts for profound knowledge. The Church on Her side is apt to underestimate the intelligence of the people, relying too much on the truth of her revelation without exerting herself to apply that truth to every time and in every place. She is content with her message without perceiving that it may ring hollow in the ears of many who hear. She shews a timidity in marching from her citadel, a hesitation in examining those thousand and one problems which at the moment rightly or wrongly are perplexing the minds of men. If new aspects of the Nature of God, fresh indications of an after-life, strange manifestations of mysterious

* These words were written before the controversies raised by the Bishop of Zanzibar's open letter to the Bishop of St. Albans began. While intending in the above passage to deprecate needless abtrusion of questions of detail, I should like to make it clear that upon the fundamental facts of the Christian Faith it seems to the writer that there is no room for variation of belief or latitude of interpretation.

forces, are the direction in which men's thoughts are turning, a reiteration of doctrinal and ethical principles alone is insufficient; those to whom it might be of the greatest use are elsewhere. Christianity is nothing if not universal. The Church should be swift to recognise the changing interests which from time to time engross attention, and to adapt Her message. It is not asked of Her that she should attack, only that she should sympathize with and enlighten those whose opinions are too readily condemned as heterodox. If the present tendency is a love of knowledge, an interest in scientific and psychic phenomena, an intellectual curiosity, it is not enough for Her to stick doggedly at her post conscientiously conducting services for the benefit of the few. The gleams of enlightenment shining through the world cannot be swept aside: the Temple must be built upon the foundations that are already there. The progress of Christianity has never been maintained in the past and will never be furthered in the future by the substitution of one system for another radically unlike it, but by a patient process of grafting.

It is impossible to avoid the conviction that Christianity has developed into something different from what its Founder intended. This fact at least is clear that while enunciating universal principles its visible presentation on earth is not universal, but in the

opinion of many unsatisfying. The root of the evil, as we have suggested, lies in the rigidity of the material organisation. The programme of the Church is too stereotyped, and her work therefore laboured with the outward form preponderating. That which at one time formed a fitting vehicle of expression now threatens to become a prison. And this danger is enhanced by the enormous success which has attended every department of physical research. Mechanical inventions and industrial prosperity have given excessive prominence to the material world, a change which is stamped upon the Church. The use of worldly methods—popularity and numbers, feverish energy and commercial push,—has been approved. In the lives of the clergy there is little retirement into the wilderness; and perhaps this is why preaching is so rarely inspired with dynamic force, with that thrill of energy which rivets attention and transforms lives. But the failure of the clergy in this respect is scarcely surprising in view of their numerous duties. Meetings, clubs, visits, interviews, classes, lectures, services, addresses, sermons, charitable organisations,—all the exacting routine of parochial work—claim their time. In the exigencies of the moment all is one long rush, and the excuse given is the shortness of time and the amount of work waiting to be done. And yet if ever work seemed behindhand it must have seemed

so in Palestine two thousand years ago. The Life of Christ was not a continual hurry. His public ministry occupied only three years, and the outstanding feature of those three years was a constant withdrawal from apparently favourable opportunities to obtain quiet in the deserts. There is need of active work to-day as never before, but with the increasing need comes the absolute necessity of periodic retirement; in the midst of thronging duties there is a danger of forgetting the means appointed for fulfilling those duties.

The remedy then does not lie in an isolation of religion but in a careful adjustment of its material surroundings. As long as soul and body are united the spiritual must have an external function, and many duties of a Church proceed from her association with the State. On the ground of utility alone they are indispensable to one another. In maintaining law by compulsion a government takes no account of higher motives regulating action. Religion supplements this by teaching a better reason for obedience to authority than the avoidance of unpleasant consequences. Among the constitutional advantages in the past contributed by the Church to this country are the institution of order and the principle of representative government, liberty of administration, defence of the people against despotic rulers. Every attempt at social reform is directly or indirectly the result of

Christianity. Prominent among moral qualities which it encourages are moderation in success, a recuperative power in disaster, high ideals of citizenship, ability to resist decadence, a moral as well as a physical stamina. In return the State permits the Church to possess property and conduct services. Without the consent of civil authorities neither tithe nor convocations would be possible; the external life of the Church depends entirely upon the pleasure of the State. But the bond of union is stronger than identity of interests. The end of the material is to express the spiritual immanent within it, and politics are nothing but the practical application of religion. "Religion declares the belief and the aim, politics regulate society in the practical realisation of that belief and prepare the means for attaining that aim."* The terms secular and religious, civil and ecclesiastical, Church and State, denote different aspects of the same thing. The object of statecraft is to direct affairs in such a manner as to afford the citizen full scope for the exercise of his religious faculties; the assertion of superiority over contemporary nations is only a secondary purpose undertaken in the cause of justice. But in the struggle for pre-eminence the true function of the State is often disregarded, and the towering fabric of matter becomes all-important. In the process of climbing, the

* Dr. Stubbs, late Bishop of Truro.

steps of the ladder absorb attention. Yet as that life which pulsates to the allurements of the flesh caricatures the purpose of living, so that State whose policy is dictated only by motives of self-aggrandisement has forgotten the primary cause of its existence.

As the sphere of political influence widens religious responsibility increases. Much may be given: but it is given with a purpose, and much is required. After years of plenty in the land, with peace and prosperity bequeathed by two notable Sovereigns, are we availing ourselves of the opportunity given to a professedly Christian country to shew the right use of power in promoting the welfare of the world? With an increase of riches has come an increase of luxury. Instead of union induced by common interests the greed of the wealthy has excited the animosity of the poor. It is an age of class hatred, master against man, employer against employed, capital against labour. Surely the day of our visitation cannot be far distant; and it will depend upon what account we can give of our stewardship whether years of happiness still remain. Church and State are far from co-extensive: the Church is divided, the State self-absorbed. They are not hostile, but stand apart. The intrusion of religious principle into political problems is considered sentimental, the prophecy of an ultimate co-extension visionary. Political and religious expediency are not

synonymous. The time is not yet ripe; man is still subject to brutish passions. Christianity has leavened only a portion of the world: economic unrest prevails, social problems abound, vice is condoned, war has not become obsolete. Yet without doubt an advance has been made. Position after position is being wrested from the enemy, and the time is foreshadowed when conscious effort will be needed no longer, when man will have inherited from the triumphant conflicts of the past an innate impulse towards God. Those whose lives have displayed an instinctive tendency towards purity and unselfishness are the forerunners of mankind. The incoming tide of progress is creeping slowly up the sands, and each wave of each generation deposits some treasure gained from the ocean of time.

But before the soul can obtain untroubled mastery of the body there must come a final struggle; the death-agonies of the old life will be the travail-pangs of the new. A last resistance must take place before the flesh is made an obedient servant, before the day dawns and the shadows of evil flee away. Shame, fear, and love, are the beacons which light the way, and the thought of our spiritual citizenship softens the hopelessness of attaining personal perfection. We are not isolated units but integral members of a vast Society, and although we cannot reflect on earth a

faultless image of Christ we may contribute our share to that likeness mirrored in the hosts of humanity. That the goal of universal concord will be reached at last seems certain; it is no dream of an idealistic philosophy. We need not fear to remember that wars and revolutions are the natural excrescences of national progress and decay, that history gives no encouragement of a Utopian State. The fact of one religion in full sway over mankind has never been chronicled by historians,—not because such an eventuality is inconceivable, but because the influences which could bring it to pass have not yet had time to mature. Something of the power of Christianity over individuals and nations has already been experienced, and a wider sphere remains for the future. The necessary conditions are present, —the youthfulness of man, the tide of progress, and the Person of Christ.

The tearstained records of the past, the millions of years of weary travail which have gone to the birth of humanity, foretell a marvellous consummation even on earth. From the suffering of the present is to blossom a still more glorious future. Enormous realms of psychic force are yet to be conquered, and as we learn the power of mind over matter some of the miracles of Christ may fall within our range. But the increasing strength of man will not decrease the sway of Christ. It will not be the drawing down of a Divine

Being from an idealised eminence to the levels of a fallen human kind, but the rise of man after many weary struggles towards a perfect Pattern. Instead of forbidding us to advance into those regions to which the light of knowledge has not yet penetrated, Christ has shewn that they lie within our sphere. He stands on the top rung of humanity calling to struggling creatures far below, and in that Voice there is encouragement as well as command. Whether the promise of the future is to be a shadowy and unsubstantial dream or the realisation of all that has gone before depends upon the loyal co-operation of each individual member. If such a prospect is regarded as unpractical, if there is no corresponding effort, unpractical and unrealised it will most certainly become. A point has been reached where further progress requires strenuous and united effort. A vague perception of the goal no longer suffices. We have much cause for humility, much reason also to hope. The sun of human life has not yet reached the meridian; the beauties of morning still irradiate the path, but the warmth and brightness of day fade in the chill of twilight. When night falls we must have reached our journey's end. Our road is built upon the lives and hopes of the past. With Christ as Guide there can be no uncertainty at the parting of the ways, no discouragement in the face of difficulty or disappointment. With unswerving steps we shall pass through

raging torrents, across plains and barren wastes, until in the golden glow of sunset our eyes behold the flashing pinnacles of the City of God. There in the Presence of our Master perplexities will be answered and harsh dissonances resolved. For we ourselves shall have come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

THE END

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